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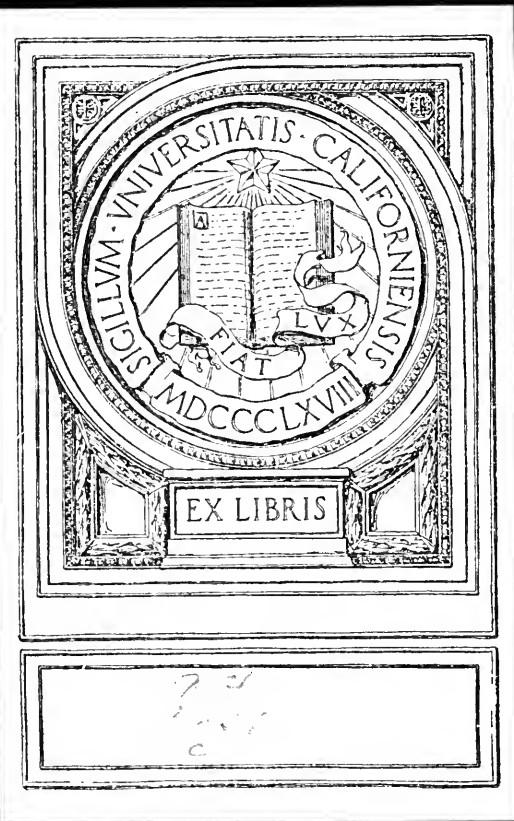
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Plays by Robert Bridges.

No. iv. Christian Captives.

NO. 1100  
AVAILABILITY

THE  
CHRISTIAN CAPTIVES

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS IN A MIXED  
MANNER

BY  
ROBERT BRIDGES.



# THE CHRISTIAN CAPTIVES.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KING OF FEZ.

ALMEH ... his daughter.

SALA BEN SALA his General.

TARUDANTE ... Prince of Morocco.

FERDINAND ... Princes of Portugal.

ENRIQUE ... maid to Almeh.

ZAPEL ... maid to Almeh.

## CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN CAPTIVES.

*Soldiers, Guards, and Messengers.*

*The scene is in the garden of a castle of the King of Fez, by the sea.*

### ACT I.

*Almeh and Zapel.*

*Almeh.*

**A**HY never came we here before? To think  
I have lived for eighteen years shut up in  
Fez,  
Hemmed by the sandy desert, and all the  
while

There was the sea! To have never seen the sea!

*Za.* If thou hadst ever seen it, where were now  
Thy joy? 'tis the first sight makes the delight,  
To them that in this castle dwell, the sea.

Is as the desert was to us at Fez.

*Al.* Custom will dull the sense of any pleasure.  
But set them down at Fez, would they not pine?  
There's life in the air. 'Twixt yon blue roomy dome  
And watery pavement the young winds charge forth  
Stored with refreshment: now we taste the springs  
Man's spirit should drink, the very mountain torrent  
Of heaven, that were content to slake our throats'  
Immortal thirst at stagnant pools. What, Zapel,  
Is the limit of our stay? now I am here;  
I would abide for ever.

*Za.* I know as little

As thou. The king, thy sire, came here to fight  
The unbelievers: when they are beaten back  
We shall go home. But why he sent for thee  
I cannot guess.

*Al.* Last night I know not, Zapel,  
Whether I slept or waked,

*Za.* Nor could I sleep.

*Al.* But as I lay and listened to the sea,  
I plainly heard a waft of singing voices,  
That rose and fell and died anon away,  
Whiling the dark with some sweet lullaby.

*Za.* Why, 'twas the Christian captives that thou  
heardst.

*Al.* Ah! prisoners in the castle: I had forgot:  
'Twas told me. And they are Christians! Can it be  
They sing so sweetly?

*Za.* Nay, I call it not sweet.  
'Tis sadder than the moaning of the wind  
To hear them praise their god.

*Al.* True, it was sad:  
Unearthly it seemed. Now more than ever, Zapel,  
I am glad I came; if there be Christians here,  
And I may come to see them. All my life  
I have heard strange things of them, and wondered  
much.

What they were like. I'll speak with them.

Za. Ha! ha!

Al. Why not?

Za. They lie chained in a noisome pit,  
Where 'tis impossible to come.

Al. Who be they? 40

What is their fault?

Za. They are captives in the war.

Al. My father doth not use his captives so.

Za. They are unbelievers.

Al. True; yet that's no crime

But what they might impute to us. Were we  
In their hands fallen, thus cut off from our homes,  
'Twere cruel to be tortured for the faith.

Za. They are worthless dogs.

Al. Alas! is all my teaching  
So cast away upon thy boorish soul?

Pity makes brethren of our enemies.

Za. Forgive me, lady; I spoke in haste; and  
yet— 50

I would that thou couldst think as I.

Al. Indeed,

That were attainment. Vex me not, I bid thee;  
But plan with me how I may see these captives:  
Were 't but to have them sing to me I'd do it;  
But curiosity and pity alike

Move me. If man is cruel, 'tis woman's part  
To ease the suffering which she cannot hinder.

Za. How wouldst thou see them?

Al. I shall ask my father

To grant them, if it be but once a day,

To walk at liberty within the walls. 60

Za. 'Tis pity Sala is not here.

Al. Thy meaning?

Za. The general hath the keeping of the castle,  
And he would grant thy way in any wish,  
Howe'er preposterous.

Al. And thou sayst not ill.

Sala is approachable and kind at heart:

'Tis pity he is away. [Trumpets heard without.

Za. Here comes the king;

He bade me shew thee hither in the garden,

And here will look to find thee.

Al. Go, I bid thee, [Exit Zapel.

And tell him that I am here. 70

Now shall I know why I was sent for hither.

Would 'twere to take this castle for my own,

With no more retinue than might suffice

To till this garden, and to cook my food.

I'd win these Christian captives to my service

For ministers and minstrels; ay, and they

Should row me on the sea. I'd have my books

In the northern tower, where set on high my lamp,

Forestalling darkness with its seaward ray,

Sailors should look for, and on tranquil nights

Hear solemn music faintly, and believe

There was enchantment. Could I have my will,

So would I live. And where's the gain to be

The daughter of a king, when every wish

Nearest one's heart is of like course denied,

As to the meanest peasant . . . when one word,

One nod could grant it?

Enter King.

K. Almeh! my rose of June!  
Queen of my gardens, flower of all my kingdom!

Al. Honour be thine, my sire.

K. I bring thee joy.

Hast thou not wondered why I sent for thee?

Al. Why was it? I long to know.

K. (giving) See for thyself.

Al. A picture!

K. 'Tis a portrait.

Al. And of whom?

K. Dost thou not guess who this young Kaled is:  
This high and dauntless brow, this stalwart arm,

Keen eye and martial poise?

Al. If this be he,

Who made of late entreaty for my hand,

Prince Tarudante . . .

K. A happy omen. Ay, look, girl, and love him, for he weds thee well  
With all Morocco.

Al. Yet I cannot love

They wish to banish me so far.

K. Thy marriage

Will bring Morocco nearer, and renew

Our old alliance; for thy valiant lover

Comes not with gold to woo thee, but sharp steel.

His flag is black, his ceremonious train

Are twenty thousand horsemen sworn to avenge

The Prophet . . . Ceuta will be mine.

Al. Ah, sire!

I like not love that comes with war to woo.

K. But war that shall bring peace, whose lasting  
olive

May not be sceptred in my hand, until

This fallen jewel be set back in my crown.

Thy bridal with Morocco shall wipe out

The old dishonour that hath vexed my reign.

Al. And yet doth Centa, sire, in all thy kingdom  
Rank as a little town.

K. Thou art a woman;

How can I show thee? This anemone,

'Tis beautiful, nor canst thou say its grace

Resides in this part nor in that: but look;

I pluck a petal from it.—Thou beholdest

My kingdom without Ceuta. Wouldst thou wish

To set this back unto the perfect flower?

Al. How could I do it?

K. I must tell thee all. 120

Our ancestors, thou knowest, blest be their names,

Long ruled in Spain, and made that coign of the earth

The glory of all; but to the peaceful arts

Turning their genius when the sword was sheathed,

Their prudence slept: for that half-barbarous race,

Whom conquering they had spared, grew up more apt

In arms, and rising 'gainst our easy folk

O'erthrew and dispossess them;—and, not content

To have driven us out of Spain, pursued us hither,

Where in our southern bounds we lived retired,

Behind the ocean as an ample shield.

'Twas in thy grandsire's time, ere thou wert born,

They did this wrong; the boastful Portuguese

Swollen with malice,—why should I say it?—

King Joam and his sons, all unprovoked,

För we had oaths of peace, attacked us here

With sudden treacherous assault, and seized

Ceuta, our strongest fortress thitherward.

Impregnable we deemed it, and indeed

Impregnable have found it 'gainst ourselves

For twenty years, besieging it in vain.

Then should this shame, unbearable to us,  
Prove but incitement to our foes, a foothold.  
For further wresting. Two months have not passed  
Since that a new Armada sailed from Tagus  
Against Tangiers, and both by land and sea  
Beleaguered woul'd have left that city, too,  
And added my dishonour to my father's.  
Had not Ben Sala's generalship o'ermatched  
Their most infernal malice. Praised be Allah!  
They fell, they fled ; and such as fled not lie  
Dead on our sands or in our dungeons' chained.

*A.* Are those the captives in the castle pit?  
*K.* Ay, but thou breakst my tale ; mark what I tell.—

The victory mine, I looked to make fair peace,  
And would have given my prisoners in exchange  
For Ceuta ; but the prince of Portugal,  
Behind those walls retired, refused the ransom ;  
And gathering reinforcement hath come forth  
To devastate the country. 'Tis 'gainst him  
That Sala marched five days ago. Meanwhile  
Morocco, who was treating for thy hand,  
Heard tidings of our war, and having now  
An armament collected 'gainst the tribes,  
Has turned it to my rescue. 'Twas for this  
I sent for thee ; in furtherance of thy marriage ;  
Hoping thereby to bind him in the terms  
I have to tell thee. However Sala fare,  
And hitherto no news comes from his camp,  
'Twere no achievement worthy of Tarudante  
To make dispersal of a broken foe :  
I shall propose a greater enterprise ;  
I'll say "Thou will not grudge to sweep the bounds  
Of the fair realm, whose heiress thou wouldest wed."  
Make we this compact—Win me Ceuta back  
And drive the idolaters across the sea,  
Ere thou take home my daughter for thy queen."

*A.* But doth Morocco, sire, know I am here?  
*K.* Nay; nor myself knew, when I sent for thee,  
How 'twould fall out : 'twas timed most happily.

*A.* But coming not to woo, may he not find  
Offence in the constraint ; as I confess  
I feel to lay it on him, tho' my lover?

*K.* Nay, nay, girl ; he is in earnest ; meet him  
frankly ;

'Tis by his love thou shalt restore my town.

#### Enter Messenger.

*Mess.* News from the army, Sire.

*K.* Thou lookest black :  
What is it? speak.

*Mess.* O mighty king, 'tis ill.  
Sala ben Sala's forces were attacked  
At nightfall by the Christians. In the dark  
Was battle waged. By morn, what men remained  
And all the camp were captive.

*K.* God forbid !  
Five thousand men were there : be none escaped ?

*Mess.* Such as in darkness fled.

*K.* And fledst thou thence ?  
*Mess.* The general sent me on.

*K.* And what of him ?

*Mess.* The dawn discovered him, when all was  
lost,

Fighting on foot upon a little hill,

Surrounded by the foe ; when seeing no hope,

He made surrender to the Christian leader,  
Who gave him liberty. Thus far to tell  
He bade, and that he followed speedily.

*K.* When will he come?

*Mess.* Sire, tho' I used all duty,  
He hath overtaken me and dismounts without.

*K.* Go, wait upon him. [Exit Messenger.]  
Accursed be the seed-

Of these idolaters. Five thousand men,  
The best in Fez : the right arm of my power.  
Lost in one night. Five thousand men were there.  
Ah ! by God's holiest names !

*A.* Thank heaven, dear father,  
The best is saved, if Sala be escaped.

*K.* True, girl ; and from the ill there's good to come :

Their victory will lead these devils on.  
Ay, they will come. They know not of Morocco ;  
They run into a trap.

*A.* Will you make peace ?  
*K.* God bids us smite these hogs : I would that hell

Were deeper to receive them.

#### Enter Sala.

Sala ben Sala, peace be with thee !

*Sa.* The peace of heaven be thine, my king !

*K.* Thou comest  
Most swiftly from the battle.

*Sa.* With less haste  
Than needed ; but fatigue and wounds delayed me.  
What see I ? The princess here ! Alas, alas !  
O my disaster !

*A.* Now I thank God, Sala,  
That thou art alive.

*Sa.* To such shame is not good.  
Sire, while there's time, escape ; and leave me here  
To hold the castle for thee as I may.

*K.* Have thou no fear, Sala. My daughter, go :  
Leave us alone ; or better sit thou there,  
And hear what Sala tells : and, Sala, thou  
Begin the tale, for which thy messenger  
Hath well prepared my ear. Here is thy seat.

*Sa.* Hear then, my liege, what happened, as I tell.

(Aside.) Yet how to tell my shame in Almeh's ears ?—  
'Tis the fifth day since thou didst send me forth  
Against the Christian bands, which as we learned  
Harassed the plains of Centa.—Thither I marched  
Four thousand strong, besides our cavalry.

And bowmen : Here and there some small encounters  
Drove back the foe within the gates, and then  
I made return, establishing the country  
And strengthening the garrisons, nor heard  
That any greater force had come afiedl :

When yesterday at noon our scouts espied  
The flash and dust of marching in the west,  
Among the hills : thither we turned our face,  
And had no fear but for the foe's escape,  
Nor guessed how much the lurking enemy

Outmatched our weakened numbers. What surprise,—  
I blame myself,—then, when our scouts came in.  
At sunset with the tidings that the foe,  
Whom we thought flying from us, held the pass  
Against our coming. Straight I chose a spot  
Such as we might defend, and there encamped,

And would have stayed till morn, when suddenly  
The stragglers on our rear were driven in  
By horse that fell upon our flank ; and soon  
I heard our front engaged. The moon to them,  
—That was our peril,—the accursed yellow moon  
Exposed our camp, while in the shadowy glens  
The night hid their attack : our disposition  
Was else not ill. Taking sufficient force,  
I turned to clear the rear; but in the dark  
Met with great numbers. How we fought God  
knows,  
Surrounded on all hands. If any fled  
I cannot guess : but battling there till dawn,  
I saw at daybreak there were left with me  
But hundreds against thousands. Then to save  
The needless slaughter, I gave up my sword  
Unto the Christian leader, Ferdinand.  
Of Portugal ; nor ever had here returned  
To speak of the disaster, but that prince,  
Clement as valiant, asked me courteously  
My name, and hearing it returned my sword,  
And bidding me choose out from all his suite  
What horse best pleased me,—for my own was  
killed.—

He raised his helm, and said;  
“Go free, brave Sala ; ride and tell thy king  
We follow thee to rescue from his hands  
The prisoners he withholds.” That is my tale.  
Allah is great, and what he doth to-day  
To-morrow he may undo.

*K.* This courteous Christian  
Is but a fool : for had he kept thee fast,  
He might have had his men in thy exchange.

*Sa.* No less now must thou grant them.  
*K.* No, by God.  
Hark, Sala : these few days thou hast been away  
Have brought me from the east four times the force  
Which thou ill-fatedly hast lost. Morocco  
Lies camped a short league hence, and in his tents  
Are twenty thousand men.

*Sa.* Morocco is here?

*K.* Said I not well? Is he not one to meet  
These Christians? Let them come. How many be  
they?

*Sa.* Eight, maybe, or nine thousand. Where's  
Morocco?

*K.* At Alcabar. When look they to be here?

*Sa.* They have no thought we can oppose their  
host,

And will not hasten.

*K.* We will be ready for them.  
Prepare to leave by noon : thou must collect  
What men thou canst. I will go write my summons  
To Tarudante. Stay : I have not enquired  
What are thy wounds.

*Sa.* Nothing that should forbid.  
Immediate service : food, an hour of rest  
Will make me fit.

*K.* In three hours be thou ready.  
[Exit.

*Al.* Go thou within, Sala ; and rest thee now.  
Or wilt thou first take food?

*Sa.* There's time enough.  
Bid me not hence, my rest and food are here.  
How cam'st thou hither?

*Al.* The king sent for me.

*Sa.* And why? Thee in the camp! O beauteous  
Almeh,  
Dost thou think vilely of me, that the Christian  
Surprised and overcame me? If I had known  
That thou wast here . . .

*Al.* Stay, Sala : thou wilt hurt  
Thy soldiership. I doubt not Ferdinand  
Is a most worthy foe : I rather fear  
He hath a quality unconquerable.

*Sa.* Ha! then, I am scorned.

*Al.* I mean lie is generous :  
He set thee free. Couldst thou not match that deed?  
*Sa.* As friend or foe? Who would outmatch him bravely.  
Nay, but to see him in his angel-fairness  
Provoked my emulation, and I vowed  
Some day to kill his horse, and take his sword,  
And cry him quit!

*Al.* Still thou'rt for war: 'twere better  
Pay thy debt fairly with the price he asks,  
These miserable captives.

*Sa.* I would have done so.  
But thou didst hear the king refuse. He is sworn  
To grant no terms till Ceuta be restored.  
Besides our prophet's law forbids this traffic,  
To exchange our captives with the infidels.

*Al.* But hast thou then thyself, Sala, no power  
To do them any kindness ; or for me  
Wilt thou not grant them so much liberty  
As to walk in the garden once a day?  
If I might speak with them I might do somewhat.  
To pay the debt we owe their general ;  
And to speak truth, for my own sake I ask it.

*Sa.* How for thy sake?

*Al.* I wish to hear them sing.

*Sa.* How could that please? Who told thee that

they sing?  
*Al.* 'Twas last night, Sala, as I lay long awake  
Dreamily hearkening to the ocean murmur,  
Softer than silence, on mine ears there stole  
A solemn sound of wailful harmony :  
So beautiful it was that first I thought  
This castle was enchanted, as I have read  
In eastern tales ; or else that 'twas the song  
Of people of this land, who make the sea  
Their secret god, and at midnight arise  
To kneel upon the shore, and his divinity  
Beseech with shrilling prayer : or then it seemed  
A liquid-voiced choir of spirits that swam  
Upon the ocean surface, harpin' hand,  
Swelling their hymns with his deep undersong.  
That was the Christian captives.

*Sa.* Twas the night  
Softened their wails to sweetness : as the space  
Twixt hell and heaven makes the cries of the damned  
Music to the angels.

*Al.* Sala, 'tis not the king,  
Tis thou art cruel ; thou hast a heart of hate,

*Sa.* O nay, a heart of love. I would not count  
Dishonour, Almeh ; I would be at peace.  
With shame and infidels and all the world,  
Wouldst thou be mine.

*Al.* Now, if my father heard thee!  
Thou dar'st much, thinking that I cannot tell :  
Which if I have never done, 'tis that I am loth  
To lose so old a friend ; 'tis pain to see  
That as I am grown from childhood, thou art grown

From friendship, and for loving me too much  
Must love me now no more.

*Sa.* Ah! what is that? 360  
A portrait in thy hand? Nay show it me.  
Why dost thou blush? Who is the happy one  
Thou carriest thus to gaze on?

*Al.* Look and see.  
*Sa.* 'Tis Tarudante. O thou faithless Almeh,  
To speak of friendship who hast never told me  
Thou hast a lover. Now I see the cause.  
Why thou art here. This boy.—'Tis a smooth cheek,  
A pretty picture. Ah! wert thou not shamed  
To slight me for a sprinkling of grey hair  
About my temples, thou wouldst never thus  
Have hid thy passion. 370

*Al.* Tho' thou hast stolen from me  
A privilege to love me, I deny thee.  
The liberty to judge me and reprove.

*Sa.* Ever, when thou hast bidden my love be dumb,  
My tongue hath been obedient: but my anger,  
My jealousy will speak. How gitest thou this?

*Al.* Question not so, or I will never tell.

*Sa.* Have pity, Almeh, and tell me.

*Al.* Then 'tis thus.  
My father gave it me this very hour,  
As herald of the prince whom it portrays. 380  
He comes on double mission, first to fight  
Against our foes . . .

*Sa.* Hast thou consented, Almeh?  
*Al.* If 'tis my father's will, and if the prince  
Be earnest in his courtship . . .

*Sa.* Ah! thou dost wish it.  
*Al.* My wish can count but little; but my wish  
Is not for this nor any other marriage.

*Sa.* Thou hast yielded to the thought. Would I  
had died  
On Ferdinand's sword; or that that prince had ne'er  
Heard my ill-fated name, Sala, far happier  
Chained in a Spanish galley, than set free 390  
To find thee in a rival's arms.

*Al.* O shame!  
How have I yielded?

*Sa.* Thou hast taken in hand  
This cursed portrait: held it . . .

*Al.* Nay, I pray.  
*Sa.* Gazed on it, fondled it: a pictured boy!  
Thy champion.

*Al.* I bid thee think . . .  
*Sa.* A painted image!

*Al.* And what, pray, wouldst thou have had me do?

*Sa.* What do?  
Never to have taken it: refused it: scorned it:  
Cast it beneath thy feet: trodden it to atoms.

*Al.* Thou wrongst me, Sala; now: thou art  
overcome.

With fasting and much fighting.

*Sa.* O, I am wronged  
To have the temper of my passion judged  
As hunger or fatigue. Here is thy picture,  
Thy lover. Take it back. Farewell. I go,  
But not to eat or rest. Almeh, farewell:  
I would have died for thee.

*Al.* Nay, go not thus  
Unkindly.

*Sa.* 'Tis farewell: but not unkindness,  
Lest thou shouldst say my last word was unkindness,

I will go seek the king, and shall persuade him  
Ere I depart to grant the Christian captives  
The little liberty which thou hast asked:  
Then to the war; wherein I pray that heaven  
Hath laid my death: if anywhere on earth  
Within my reach, I'll find it. O farewell.  
The Angels guard thee.

[Going.  
*Al.* I bid thee go not thus.

## ACT II.

*Almeh and Zapel listening. The Christian Captives are singing at back among the trees.*

### CHORUS.

*Jesu dulcis memoria,  
Dans vera cordis gaudia;  
Sed super misericordia,  
Eius dulcis presentia.* [Music by Allegri.]

*Za.* How strange a moan!

*Al.* Hush, Zapel, hush: go in.  
Leave me. Stay, I will go with thee so far 420  
That they shall think we both are gone. This way.

*Almeh and Zapel go aside. Exit Zapel. Almeh enters arbour.*

*CHORUS.* *Jesu deus angelicum,  
In auro dulce canticum,  
In ore mel mirificum,  
In corde nectar cœlicum.  
Nil canitur suavius,  
Nil auditur jucundius,  
Nil cogitatur dulcius,  
Quam Jesu Dei filius.* [Music by Anerio.]

*Al.* (aside). They sing of Jesus, whom they make  
their god. 430

I understand no more: only their praise  
Is sweeter than whatever I have heard  
In mosque or sacred temple, or the chant  
Of holy pilgrims, that beguile the road.  
I'll learn what they will tell me of their hymns,  
And whence they have this music. Ah, they see me.  
Sir, pray withdraw not thus. Step on this terrace;  
Hence may you view the sea. Your helpless lot  
I pity; and if indeed I have any power  
To ease the pains of your captivity,  
Tis but a debt I owe you for the pleasure  
Your music wakes within me. Come this way.  
*Cho.* Lady, we thank thy grace and gentleness:  
But yonder grove contents us, in the shade  
Where if we walked retired, we shall not strain  
The privilege we prize.

*Al.* Why, since I ask,  
Take courage, come. There's none will see but I.  
*Ch.* We dare not disobey.

*Al.* Come forward, hither.  
I bid you all for pleasure as my friends.  
And ye could much delight me, would ye tell 450  
What theme ye lately sang: for though sweet music  
Needs no interpretation, yet the thought  
That gives occasion to the smile of love  
Is dear itself; and I am like a lover  
Wondering what fancy 'twas, that bred a strain

Of such deliberate joy.

*Ch.* Forbid the thought,  
Lady: the sea, with whose expansive sight  
Thou thoughtest to rejoice our prisoned eyes,  
Doth not dissever us from our lost homes  
With wider deeper gulf, than that which lies  
Betwixt our souls and thine. Thou mayst not know.

*Al.* I know ye sang of Jesus.

*Ch.* Knowst thou that,  
And askest more?

*Al.* Ay tell me.

*Ch.* Praised be God!  
*Al.* I envy you your skill. I prithee tell me  
What was't ye sang.

*Ch.* The praise of Jesus' name.  
'Tis what all nature sings; the whole creation  
Ceaseth not, nor is silent in his praise:  
Neither God's angels, nor the spirit of man  
With speech directed unto him, nor things  
Animate nor inanimate, by the mouth  
Of them that meditate thereon: which praise  
Music hath perfected, and that we use  
Less for his glory, than that thence our souls  
May from their weariness arise to him,  
In whom is our refreshment and true strength.

*Al.* I pray you sing again.

*Ch.* If thou wilt hear,  
We will sing more.

*O Jesu mi dulcissime,*  
*O spes spirantis anime,*  
*Te querunt piae lacrymae,* [Music by  
*Et clamor mentis intima.* Anerio.]

*Al.* Music ne'er found a better speech. I pray  
Could I sing with you? Were it long to learn?

*Ch.* Thou hast the art's first secret; loving it.

*Al.* Many have that: and I can sing alone,  
But ne'er have learned your many-voiced skill.

*Ch.* That is the maker's art: the song being made,  
'Tis to sing strictly, and to teach thy phrase,  
Confident rivalry, as if thou knewest  
Thy passion was the deepest, and could blend  
The wandering strains in closer harmony.

*Al.* Make me your pupil. How should I begin?  
[Drums and trumpets without.]

*Ch.* The king!

*Al.* Break off, my father is returned,  
Lest he should enter here, haste to your bounds,  
And be not seen. There will I visit you,  
Or bid you forth again.

*Ch.* We thank thee, lady.

Enter Zapel, hurriedly.

*Za.* My lady, hast thou heard?

*Al.* What is it, Zapel?

*Za.* The infidels are routed, and the king  
Is coming from the field with Tarudante  
Prince of Morocco, and betwixt them ride  
The two chief captains of the unbelievers,  
Princes of Portugal: be Allah praised.

*Ch.* Alas! O woe, alas! Forgive us, lady,  
That thus we weep before thee.

*Al.* Nay, be sure

I pity you myself, and could not blame  
Your natural grief. But 'tis the vice of war,  
That whatsoever side hath victory;

The misery is alike, nor in the advantage  
Is aught to compensate the evil done.

May God give strength to right!

*Ch.* Amen, Amen! <sup>10</sup>  
(To Z.) Pray, lady, didst thou say prince Ferdinand  
Was taken?

*Za.* Ye may question him himself;  
Talk not with me.

*Al.* I beg you, friends, be gone:  
Ye must not stay.

*Ch.* We will depart and mourn  
Within our sultry pit. [Exeunt.]

*Al.* My father comes?

*Za.* He is at the gate.

*Al.* Whate'er thou'st seen or heard  
Between me and these hapless prisoners,  
See that thou tell not.

*Za.* 'Tis an accursed thing.

*Al.* 'Tis not for thee to judge; but do my bidding.

*Za.* And thou shouldest trust me better.

*Al.* I do trust thee,  
And therefore bid thee thus.

*Za.* And I obey.

*Al.* Is not this Ferdinand they spoke of, he  
Whose chivalry we thank for Sala's life?

*Za.* That's he.

*Al.* Then I shall see this red-crossed knight,  
The noblest of them all. The general said  
He was of angel fairness; then he is cousin  
To the emperor of England.

*Za.* Thou shalt see

A Moor worth fifty Christian Portuguese,  
His conqueror, thy lover Tarudante,  
Heir of Morocco.

*Al.* Silence: see they come. 530.

Enter King with Tarudante and Ferdinand,  
followed by Enrique and Sala.

*Za.* (to A.). There's Tarudante.

*Al.* (aside). There is Ferdinand.

*King* (to T.). Now, noble prince, thou hast over-  
come our foes;

This is thy second battlefield, whereon  
Thy love may make like conquest as thy sword.

Pitch here thy tent, and make thy war in peace.

Forget the reeking and gore-dappled plain

Mid scent of pinks and jasmin, and the flush

Of hot carnation and full-blooded rose.

See, I will lead thee to the virgin fortress

That thou mayst kneel to take. Come hither, Almeh: Hére is the prince thy lover. Tarudante,  
Behold her whom thou askest for thy queen.

*Al.* (aside, coming forward). Now of these two  
might I but choose.

*K.* Come, daughter,

Put off this modesty.

*Al.* (aside). My eyes refuse him.

*Tar.* Lady, forgive my boldness in desiring  
What I had never seen. Thy beauty's fame,

The high nobility of this alliance

Led me so far; but now I have seen, I see

I must be bolder, or renounce my boldness,

That begged a grace so far beyond my thought.

*Al.* I should be much ashamed, prince, if thy suit,

Which seeks the honour of my father's house,

Stumbled at my unworthiness: but praise

Of pictures, and mere beauty is no more,—  
Exalteth but the maker. May the days

Thou spendest here with us be rich in peace. [Going.  
*Fer.* (*aside* to *En.*). By heaven, the devil is gentle  
to these Moors:

They match our folk in beauty as in arms.

*K.* Stay, Almeh, stay!

[*Almeh turns.*  
*En.* (*to F.*). These be the Spanish Arab; such a  
race

Sprang never from the sooty loins of Ham.

*Al.* (*to K.*). Excuse me, sire, I pray.

[*Exit with Zapel.*

*Fer.* (*to En.*). Devil or angel or Arab, she hath  
stolen my soul.

*Tar.* Such perfect grace, such speech and modesty  
Outbid my fancy; I would fight thy battles  
For twenty years to call thy treasure mine.

*K.* I say she is thine; and she is my only child.

*Sa.* (*aside*). And I must hear this, spoken, and  
hold my peace.

*K.* So now, prince Ferdinand; the chance of war  
In making thee my captive gives me power

To dictate terms which shall content us all.

Thou shalt go free—that is my gift to thee:—

But in return for that,—my profit this,—

I will have Ceuta; 'tis an ancient town,

By name and people African, and held

By followers of the prophet from the day

When truth unconquerable like a flood

Of sunlight dawned on the benighted west.

Their father robbed it from us, and I ask

That thou restore it. 'Tis thy ransom, prince.

The king, thy brother, will not grudge to yield

To me, a king, part of mine own, which he

Wrongfully came by; if so, he may buy thee,

His natural own, his flesh and blood, whom I

Conquered in self-defence. I'll keep thee here,

Till I may know his will; and to learn that

I'll send thy brother home, the prince Enrique,

To bear him, with what speed he may, the tidings

Of thy defeat, captivity, and the terms

Of thy release. Look not so sorrowful.

*Fer.* I thank your majesty for just rebuke

Of my courtesy. By selfish gloom

I mar my entertainment; and belie

My gratitude for kindness to me shewn

Since I was prisoner.

*K.* No thanks for that:

Nor seek I to impose a countenance

Upon thy proper feeling. Yet if now

Thou'rt sad, I spake in vain.

*Fer.* 'Tis for my fault

And ill-success I am sad: To have lost my troops

Or led them to the safe of those whose rescue

They thought to be: not for my private case,

Wherein your terms of ransom but make hope

Impossible: the cession of a town

Under the king's protection, and therewith

The peril of so many Christian souls,

The desecration of our hallowed churches,

The abandonment of loyal loving subjects

Unto the heavy yoke which Islam lays

On true believers. No king would give ear,

To such a compact: and your claim falls short;

For what you have urged doth not lay bare the root.

Ceuta is African, but not for that.

Mahomedan: this thirsty continent  
Had drunk Christ's truth for full four hundred years  
Before your prophet's birth; and now we fight  
To win back from Mahomet what he took  
By force from Christ.

*K.* What matters it to me  
What happened in the days of ignorance?  
'Tis written in our book, that the whole world  
Shall feel our sword.

*Fer.* "Tis writ in ours, that they  
Who take the sword, shall perish with the sword. 620  
*K.* Surely 'twas truly spoken of yourselves.  
Yet will I make no change, but my demand  
Shall urge upon the king your brother; he  
Will thank me for it.

*Sa.* Now, most gracious master,  
Let me befriend our foe. 'Tis four days since  
I was his prisoner, and he set me free.  
This claim the prince most generously puts by;  
Let us not pass it over: let him too  
Go find another army: we meanwhile  
Have ample force to march against the town. 630

*K.* And why should blood be spent where ink  
will serve?

'Twere thankless answer to our good ally  
To put fresh pains upon him, and not use  
His full sufficient victory.

*Tar.* My liege,  
I'll serve thee as a son, and to that title  
Would prove my fitness.

*Sa.* (*aside*). By thine absence prove it.  
*K.* And if thou, son, wouldest dally now with war,  
Rather than grasp the hours of peace and love,  
What shall I think?

*Tar.* That threat must stay me here.

*K.* Ay, stay; and I will solve thy scruple thus:  
Good Sala. By the laws of chivalry  
Thou wouldest do to thy foe as he to thee:  
But Ferdinand is not thy prisoner,  
Nor can be spared: his brother, prince Enrique,  
Whom thou didst truly capture,—the' my purpose  
Was to require his promise to return,—  
Him will I give his freedom for thy sake:  
If he return he shall not be detained.

*En.* I thank your majesty: but for my part  
I am but a traveller, that took occasion  
Of this adventure to inspect your land.  
I pray make me the hostage; I am content  
With any treatment, might I come to see  
Your city of Fez, and from your southward folk  
Learn their opinion of the Libyan coast,  
Which some aver is circled by one sea  
From where we stand to Suez. 650

*K.* And so it were,  
I care no more than doth a caterpillar:  
What could that serve? If thou'rt a man of peace,  
The fitter then for our ambassador.

*En.* 'Tis not for me to choose, and you may trust  
me  
To urge the king to treat upon your terms.  
I carry them most gladly.

*Fer.* (*to K.*). Now, I pray,  
Do as my brother begs: let him be hostage,  
And make me messenger: I will return.

*K.* Nay, nay. I doubt thee not: but 'tis my will  
Thee to keep, not thy brother.

*Fer.* Then, my Enrique, I make appeal to thee. Urge not these terms On Edward : tell him rather I am myself, And could not live ashamed.

*K.* I swear thou wrongst me, And temptest me to use thee ill. No more. Begone, Enrique ; I shall look to thee For amicable settlement. Go, therefore, And tell thy king I hold your brother here Till he surrender Ceuta. As for thee, Prince Ferdinand ; thy word shall be thy chain : Give me but that, and thou shalt have the freedom Of all this castle.

*Fer.* I give 't your majesty. *K.* 'Tis well: so all are suited. And thou, Enrique, Make thy best speed.

*Fer.* I go, your majesty. 689

*Fer.* (to E.) Thou know'st my mind.—

*En.* (to F.) In any case I will deliver thee.

*K.* No words. Begone, I pray.

*En.* So fare you well. [Exit. *K.* (to T.). And now, Morocco, come within : I'll show thee

Whatever preparation in thine honour

Is ordered ; hoping it may so content thee,

That thou wilt reconsider of thy threat

To leave us with the moon.

*Tar.* What here I have seen, Might I not take it with me when I go, Would hold me fast until the day of doom. 690

*Sa.* (aside). And may the day of doom come ere thou take it ! [Exeunt *K.* and *T.*]

(To F.) Most generous prince, forgive me.

*Fer.* I thank thee, Sala.

*Sa.* I pressed the king so far as I may dare.

He hath a temper to resent advice ;

Which urged, will rather drive him from the matter It looks to favour, than assist him towards it.

I must find other paths for my goodwill.

Deem me thy servant ; and o'erlook the wrong

I seem to have done thee, being again constrained To fight agaist thee.

*Fer.* Say no more, my friend. 700 We serve our kings. Thou didst surprise our people By numbers, merely numbers. I prithee tell me The name of your princess.

*Sa.* Almeh.

*Fer.* Betrothed.

Already to the prince my conqueror ?

*Sa.* The thing is new. Thou know'st as much as I.

*Fer.* The prince is fortunate.

*Sa.* So is the king In his alliance.

*Fer.* Is the marriage then

Between the kingdoms rather than the parties ?

*Sa.* If 'twas your war that hath determined it.

*Fer.* It were a strained ungentle consequence, 710 That I should sail from Portugal to force A lover on this lady's inclination.

*Sa.* I were like grieved.

*Fer.* Her beauty far exceeds All that I thought to find. In my own country Our court holds not her equal.

*Sa.* I believe it.

*Fer.* And if her mind be as her speech, endow'd.

*Sa.* Thou owest her so much praise for kindnesses Done to your prisoned countrymen.

*Fer.* Ah, Sala, Where be these captives kept ? if thou wouldest help me,

I pray thee bring me in time where I may see them. I must speak with them.

*Sa.* That is easy, prince.

Behind these garden grounds is a deep pit, Used as a quarry once ; steep hanging sides

Of rock it hath, that hewn away below

Are inaccessible to any foot

Save the soft lizard, that hath made his home Among the clefts with scorpions and snakes,

And on the scorching ledges basks all day.

'Tis there these Christians lie. One way there is Climbing by solid steps of native stone, 730

That comes up to the ground. Between those rocks Thou seest the iron-gate, and by the gate

The sentinel that keeps it. I would guide thee To see thy countrymen ; but there's no need

To make the hard descent ; for once a day,

At prayer and pity of our good princess, 'Tis granted them to come and walk above

In shadow of yon balmy cypress grove,

That skirts the northern brink : and but for this, Their sole refreshment, all were like to have died 740

Of woe, and scant food, and the daily stroke

Shelterless of the hot meridian sun.

*Fer.* Alas !

What fault of theirs deserved such punishment ?

*Sa.* That they refused confession of the prophet.

*Fer.* To acknowledge him were to renounce their faith.

That is no wrong.

*Sa.* Whether it be wrong or no, 'Tis not my will they undergo these pains.

*Fer.* I pray thee lead me to them, if thou mayst.

*Sa.* Nay, bide thou here, I will throw back the gate, And bid them forth : and for thy less constraint 750

Will then depart. [Goes to back, and exit.

*Fer.* Such courtesy and cruelty in one I never thought to have met, nor found on earth

So fair a prison, with an angel in it,

And no hope of deliverance. Now I see—

Nature hath vainly lavished on these Moors

Bravery and beauty and all gifts of pride ;

And left them barbarous for lack of thee,

Sweet Pity, of human sorrow born : 'tis thou

Dost raise man 'bove the brutes : 'tis thou dost make His heart so singular, that he alone,

Himself commiserating, against heaven

Pushes complaint, and finds within his heart

Room for all creatures, that like him are born

To suffer and perish.

Enter Captives from gate ; they run to Ferdinand as they see him.

*CHOR.* Hail, mighty Ferdinand !—

Hail, generous prince !—Behold

Thy countrymen enslaved.—

What hope ? what hope ? O, say—

Arm of our fatherland,

What mercy may be told ?—

Com'st thou to set us free?—  
Are we already saved?—  
Or is it true, the boast  
We hear, the triumph-song?—  
And art thou too as we, —  
(O miserable day)—  
Fall into the enemy's hand?—  
And com'st thou thus alone?  
Thine army slain and lost,—  
The cause of Christ o'erthrown.—

What hope? what hope? O say.—

*Fer.* My friends; the worst is true. Trust still in God.

*Ch.* Alas! have all our prayers been made in vain?

*Fer.* Despair not yet.

*Ch.* What hope then dost thou bring?

*Fer.* I bring you courage, friends. I come to share Your prison, since I cannot set you free.

*Ch.* Alas! thou too art captive. All is lost.—  
But if thou share our prison, shall we share Thy ransom also, when thou goest free?

*Fer.* I have no ransom, friends, that ye could share.

*Ch.* No ransom!

*Fer.* Nay, no ransom:

*Ch.* Not for thee?

*Fer.* But such a ransom as cannot be paid.

*Ch.* So great?

*Fer.* Ay, even so great, that ye yourselves Would not consent to share.

*Ch.* Tell us the sum.

*Fer.* 'Tis to surrender Ceuta to the Moor.

Now are ye silent.

*Ch.* We are flesh and blood.

*Fer.* Say ye?

*Ch.* The stones of Ceuta cannot bleed,  
The walls of Ceuta would not pine as we.

*Fer.* Then take them for example: be as they:  
Lament not, pine not.

*Ch.* Rank we now as stones?

*Fer.* Stones, but not Ceuta's stones; they if they bled

Would spout heroic blood: royally therewith  
Were they baptised, ere they might wear the cross:  
I was a babe then: but the nurse that rocked  
My cradle sang it: How the youthful prince,  
Edward my brother, led the assault and fought  
With hundreds hand to hand: how in the ships,  
That watched the issue, the old king himself  
Could no more be restrained, but forth descending,  
For envy of the fight, with aged hands  
Clambered upon the walls, and by his son  
Dealt wary strokes of death: till o'er the heaps  
Of his own slain, out of his robber nest,  
Sala ben Sala fled.

*Ch.* Long live the king!

*Fer.* Since that day hath the fame ceased? Hath not Ceuta

Been as Christ's tourney, where the nations  
Have clapped their hands to see, a few brave knights  
Hold Africa at bay, and in the field:  
Conquer whole armies of the unbelievers?

*Ch.* Praised be God!

*Fer.* I made an oath to match  
My brother's praise.

*Ch.* Alas! what fate withheld

God's favour from our arms?—We who set out  
To do him honour, and to plant the cross  
On Tangiers', as it stands on Ceuta's walls?—  
The foe lay watching for us, like a lion  
Descended from the mountains.

*Fer.* On that day  
I led your battle; and when ye were taken,  
I fled but to retrieve the day. I found  
A second army; I sought out the foe,  
And overcame him: and the furious Sala,  
Fall in my hands, I feared not to set free  
As herald of my triumph. I was here: I had come  
Even to this castle, when behold, swarming  
Innumerable from the hills around,  
The horsemen of Morocco!

*Ch.* What of the army?

*Fer.* Led off in captive gangs to serve the Moor.

*Ch.* Alas for us and them. Thou canst not save.

We are all enslaved, all undone.

*Fer.* Be so,  
Tamed wills, caged brutes, the off-scourings of fortune,  
Mere counters of disaster! I will not yield.

*Ch.* Yield, prince, for us, who left our homes so far  
To serve under thy banner; whom thine arm  
Hath led to slavery—O prince, set them free,  
Whom thou hast bound.—Restore us. Pay the price.

*Fer.* Can ye forget?

*Ch.* Nay, we remember well  
Estramadura, we remember Tagus,  
The banks of Guadiana, and our homes  
Among the vineyards; Ezla we remember,  
Obidos and Alenquer, where the trees  
Shadow the village steps, and on the slopes  
Our gardens bloom: where cold Montego laves  
The fertile valleys 'mong the hills of Beira;  
Our country we remember; and the voices  
Of wives and children, by whose tears we pray,  
Despise us not. See on our knees we bow,  
And by God's love pray thee deliver us.

[They all kneel to Ferdinand.  
*Fer.* Ah, wretched rebels! hath a little hardship  
Melted the metal from you? I see ye are dross  
Quite to the bottom. These hands that ye raise,  
Should have smote down the foe. Being as ye are,  
How took ye upon you to defend the cross?  
Doth not the shame of capture and defeat  
Suffice, but ye must kneel to beg the addition  
Of treason and betrayal, to deliver  
Your worthless bodies from the pains that ye  
Have thousandfold deserved? My brethren are ye?  
Nay I'll not look upon you.

[Turns away.

Enter Almch and Zapel.

*Al.* Lo, what is this?  
*Ch.* O gracious kind princess,  
Plead for us now.

*Al.* What would ye?  
*Ch.* Noble lady,

I have a title to thy heart's compassion  
Greater than these my countrymen, whose woes  
Have moved thy spirit, and by that kindness in thee,  
As by that beauty, —may I use the name  
Of what I only worship, —I beseech thee  
Hear them not speak, lest thou misjudge me much.

*Al.* Rise, friends: ere I can help you I must know  
What boon ye sue for.

*Fer.* Not so : lest thou add  
To theirs thy prayer, too strong to be denied.  
*Al.* What fear'st thou that my voice might win for  
them ?  
*Fer.* Ask not of them nor me.  
*Al.* Thou must dissuade  
My pity, or meet it where 'tis first engaged.  
*Fer.* Then hear the truth from me. They vainly  
beg  
Their liberty.  
*Al.* From thee ?  
*Fer.* Ay, lady.  
*Al.* How !  
For this I too was lately on my knees ;  
But that was to the king. What power hast thou  
To grant this ; or, being able, why deniest ?  
*Fer.* They think at least that they would share my  
freedom,  
If I went forth : wherefore they urge me do  
For them the thing I will not for myself.  
*Al.* And what is that ?  
*Fer.* Thy father hath appointed  
The town of Ceuta for my ransom, lady.  
*Al.* And that lies then within thy power to grant ?  
*Fer.* So far as 'tis within the power of him  
Who scorns base actions to commit the basest.  
*Al.* My sire, prince, hath a right and titled claim.  
*Fer.* Christ hath erased all titles with his cross ;  
And by that sign reclaims the world he made.  
*Al.* I know, prince, thou art generous ; for thou  
gavest  
Life to thine enemy : and for that gift  
I am thy friend. 'Tis for thyself I plead.  
The king hath nothing nearer to his heart  
Than this possession : 'tis thy life's condition.  
Yield where thou must.  
*Fer.* I hold my life as nought.  
*Al.* Then, prince, tho' not for these, nor for thyself  
Thou wilt be bent, nor to my sire wilt yield ;  
Yet for the sake of holy peace submit ;  
For pity of all our people and thine own,  
Whom pride will slay : think of the myriad wounds,  
Softness may staunch ; and how kings have no honour  
Above the keeping of their folk in peace.  
*Fer.* Is't in thy creed man shall buy peace of heaven  
By selling honour ? O nay. Let the king  
But take my life, and count my blood enough  
To be one slave's redemption ; there were then  
No cause to kneel. Yea, wouldest thou show me  
kindness,  
Make this thy prayer. Go back unto thy sire,  
And sue that he will graciously, as the exchange  
For these men's freedom, kill me, or in their pit  
Bury me alive.  
*Al.* Alas, alas !  
*Fer.* If now my words in pleading for myself  
Have hurt thee, lady, forgive them : nay, weep not.  
Until I saw thy pity for my sake,  
I had no woe to bear.  
*Al.* And woe is  
To see such suffering wrought by man on man,  
And seek to heal it with a woman's words.  
*Fer.* Lady, I need not pity : there's no fortune  
I have not heart for.  
*Al.* Now I see these men  
Have gentler hearts than thou : they gave me comfort

Receiving my compassion ; thou'rt too proud. 930  
*Fer.* For I was shamed seeing a woman weep  
Vainly for what I suffer without tears.  
*Al.* I too am bred to shows.—Prince : I was sent  
To fetch thee to the house. Attend the summons.  
My father sits to dinner, and enquires  
Wherefore thou tarriest. Of thy courtesy  
Play our good guest with freedom ; for the king  
Will use no more constraint, than as thy health  
And princely state require.  
*Fer.* I will obey thee.  
*Al.* And not my father ?  
*Fer.* Him, lady, perforce ; 940  
But thee most cheerfully. To thee no less  
Am I a captive.  
[Exeunt Almeh and Ferdinand and Zapel.  
*CHORUS.* (*The leader (1) speaks, answered by others.*)  
Now see we hope, friends : God hath sent  
His best and nearest messenger  
For our deliverance.—  
*Chor.* Who is he ?—  
(1). What, hast thou eyes, and couldst not see ?—  
*Chor.* If by thy hasty boast is meant  
The sudden love unsprung.  
Between Christ's champion and the heathen maid,  
'Tis withered on thy tongue.— 950  
(1). Heathen how call'st thou her,  
Our pitying angel who hath been,  
And from our mouth the word of truth received ?—  
*Chor.* Hath she believed ?—  
(1). How shall not love persuade,  
Now fallen to water God's own seed,  
And in such soil ?—  
*Chor.* If she confess,  
'Twill but the more our tyrant's anger feed  
With tenfold torture to oppress,  
Or end us all at a stroke.—  
(1). And so might be. 960  
But hark ye what I whisper. Mark. Ye see  
How in this garden one permitted hour  
Each day we wander free . . .  
*Chor.* Ay, ay—an hour a day—what should this  
mean ?—  
(1). By their good help, secretly armed, I say . . .  
*Chor.* What sayst thou ? Armed !—go on.—  
(1). How easy 'twere to find  
Occasion . . .  
*Chor.* When the foe is gone to fight  
Thou meanest ?—  
(1). Ay, thou'rt right.  
*Chor.* And so to overpower  
The few men left behind.— 970  
(1). See ye—  
*Chor.* Ay, ay. Well done !  
Convert our high-walled prison to a fortress strong—  
To Ceuta horse a courier—or all at night  
Make our escape by flight.—  
Each choosing a swift steed.—  
Better await until they send  
A rescue.—Nay, how long  
Could we sustain the fight ?  
(1). Now tell me, was I wrong  
Speaking of hope ?  
*Chor.* Nay, nay.  
We make thee leader.—Show the way  
To bring this soon about.

(1). Mark me. I say  
 This is no council-chamber, and I fear,  
 Unless we now make end,  
 Joy will exalt our voices to betray  
 Our hope, ere 'tis well founded. Let us return  
 Submissively to our pit, and as we go  
 Sing a strain full of woe,  
 That, reaching to the princess' ear,  
 May work upon her, that she yearn  
 To set us free. With step and voice I lead.  
 Follow.

*Chor.* We give thee heed.—

[*Going, singing as they go.*

990

And if thou dost not love his flatteries,  
 How is it that thou art found so oft alone  
 Where he must walk? that now these three days past  
 At break of dawn, ere thou wast used to stir  
 Thou must go forth, because the moon is bright,  
 Or dwindling stars should be beheld, or flowers  
 Gathered in dew; and I, who must be roused  
 To bear thee company, am in haste dismissed,  
 Or sent on useless errands, while the prince  
 Steals in my place? If I should say 'twas love . . .  
*Al.* Folly! what folly in thee. And if 'twere true,  
 Should I need thee to tell me?  
 Go fetch my yellow roses.

*Za.* And in time:

*See here he comes.*

*Al.* Begone.

*Za.* Ay, I must go.

(*Aside.*) But I can send another. [Exit.

*Al.* What is it I resent? that others see us  
 Is our life's evidence: loving as being  
 Needs this conviction.

*Enter Ferdinand.*

*Fer.* What, Almeh! thou'rt here?  
 Dost thou indeed await me?

*Al.* Didst thou think  
 I should play truant like an idle child,  
 Who, when the clock has struck cannot be found,  
 And must be dragged to school?

*Fer.* O nay! But in this world,  
 Where all things move outside our reckoning,  
 To find the least desire hath come to pass  
 Will seem a miracle.

*Al.* What is thy desire?  
 What is the miracle?

*Fer.* O beauteous Almeh!  
 If I might call thee Christian!

*Al.* Nay, I know not:  
 But what I have learned makes me desire the name.

*Fer.* Now is the purpose of my expedition  
 Revealed: for this I sailed to Africa: 1050  
 For this I was defeated, and for this  
 Brought captive here. 'Tis thou that art my prize.

*Al.* Twere a poor prize for so much war: but tell  
 me,

How came it thou'rt a soldier?

*Fer.* Thou hast thought  
 My failure shames that title?

*Al.* Nay, I ask  
 How, being a Christian, thou professest arms.  
 Why hast thou come against us, with no plea,  
 Save thy religion, and that happy gospel  
 Thou hast trampled on in coming. Peace on earth?

*Fer.* 'Tis asked too late. When conscience, like  
 an angel,

Stood in the way to bar my setting forth,  
 Zeal and ambition blinded me; tho' yet

Against the voice of them that urged me on  
 There lacked not prodigies of heaven to stay me.

For as we sailed from Lisbon, all the host  
 That lined the shore with banners and gay music,  
 Was changed, before my eyes to funeral trains;

Of black and weeping mourners, who with wails  
 And screams affrighted us. The sun in heaven  
 Turned to blood-red, and doleful mists of grey

Shut us in darkness, while the sucking ebb

### ACT III.

*Almeh.*

O delicate air, inviting  
 The birth of the sun, to fire  
 The heavy glooms of the sea with silver laughter:  
 Ye sleepy flowers, that tire  
 In melting dreams of the day,  
 To splendour disregardful; with sloth awaking;  
 Rejoice, rejoice, alway;  
 But why are ye taking  
 My soul to follow you after,  
 To awake with you, and be joyful in your delighting?  
 Ay me!

*Enter Zapel from the garden, with a basket of flowers.*

*Za.* Here are thy lilies.

*Al.* 'Tis enough of these;  
 I thank thee, Zapel. Now there grows a flower  
 Wild 'neath the castle walls, a yellow rose  
 It seems, of stubborn habit, branching low;  
 When walking on the ramparts I have seen it,  
 And wondered whence it drew its sustenance,  
 In scattered tufts upon the waste sea sands,  
 Go to the gate, and say I sent thee forth;  
 And pluck me blooms, and such a shoot of it  
 As I may set at home: if it should thrive,  
 It shall be proud I ever looked upon it.  
 Why dost thou laugh? Didst thou not hearken, girl?

*Za.* I heard thee well: Go forth, Zapel, thou  
 saidst;  
 Go where thou wilt, so thou return not soon.  
 Now is the hour prince Ferdinand should come;  
 Lovers would be alone.

*Al.* Be sure of this; 1020  
 'Tis my sole comfort to be rid of thee;  
 And when we are back in Fez, I will bestow thee  
 Upon another mistress.

*Za.* If 'tis Fez,  
 I care not. I'll command me to the queen  
 That shall be of Morocco . . . why, thou goest  
 The way to spoil thy fortunes, and dost shame  
 The suit of a most high and worthy prince  
 By favouring the Christian.

*Al.* Favouring  
 Dar'st thou to say?

*Za.* I say but what I see;  
 The infidel is dazzled by thy beauty;

1030

1030

1050

1060

1070

1080

1090

Dragged us to doom. And here now that I stand  
In the rebuke of judgment, I have no plea  
Save that I suffer : unless thou be found  
My unsought prize.

*A1.* Thou missest the conclusion,  
Considering but thyself, not those thou hast wronged.  
Thou must surrender Ceuta : 'tis a debt  
To justice and to peace : my father's honour,  
Thy duty towards thy wretched countrymen,  
And thine own freedom—

*Fer.* Let no words between us  
Be spoke in vain, as these words now must be.

*A1.* Were thy words true, my words were not in  
vain.

*Fer.* Lady, were Ceuta mine, had my sword won it,  
Thy words might move, though not thy father's threats.

*A1.* I hear the gate : some one comes forth. I pray  
Retire, ere we be seen. [Exit r.

*Enter Sala and Tarudanite.*

*Sa.* I owe him life, your highness, and would  
stake it  
A thousand times upon his princely worth.  
As are his manners, you shall find his honour.  
I will go fetch him.

*Ta.* Stay, I understand. 1100  
Something, and know that now he is in the grounds  
With the princess alone. Go if thou wilt.  
Assure thyself : I need to see no more.

*Sa.* Await me here then while I go, I pray thee  
Judge not so hastily:

*Ta.* I judge not hastily.

*Sa.* Then wait me here.

*Ta.* I wait for no man, Sala ;  
Save out of courtesy, in which I hope.  
I have not lacked hitherto.

*Sa.* You have rather set us  
In everlasting debt.

*Ta.* Speak not of that.

*Sa.* Then mock not our repayment.

*Ta.* Look you, Sala ;  
I understand to seize a prize by force,  
Or kindly take a gift, but not to sue.

*Sa.* Yet women must be wooed.

*Ta.* Ay, that's a game :  
But if 'tis more than play, I've no mind for it.  
Patch up the matter as you can. For me,  
I cry To horse.

*Sa.* Wait but a moment longer ;  
I will fetch Ferdinand. (*Aside.*) 'Tq have two rivals,  
Tho' both be princes, may be better yet  
Than to have only one. [Exit.

*Ta.* By-heaven, they trifle with me, and by waiting  
I allow it ; cherishing an idle softness.  
That fools me to take slights, yet cannot soothe  
My pride to competition. Nay, nor would I  
Rob grey-haired Sala of it, if he has dreamed  
His heirs shall reign in Fez. . . But the infidel—  
How should the general countenance him, —altho'  
There be some tie of chivalry between them ?  
A riddle it is ; a riddle I leave it. Now

To save engaged honour I must feign  
Some exigency. I will go warn my men 1130  
That they break camp at sunrise. In three days  
All is forgotten. [Exit.

*Enter Sala with Ferdinand.*

*Fer.* He is not here. 'Tis well.

*Sa.* What wouldst thou, Sala?

*Fer.* For thy safety, prince,  
And for my honour both, accept the terms,  
And go hence while thou mayst.

*Fer.* Now spare thy words ;  
For I am firm.

*Sa.* Then if thou close the door,  
Thou must o'erleap the wall.

*Fer.* What mean'st thou? Fly.

*Sa.* Feign sickness. I will let thee forth to-night,  
Thou shalt be safe beyond pursuit to-morrow,  
While yet 'tis thought thou keep'st thy chamber.

*Fer.* Nay.

*Sa.* As men will risk their lives to save their lives,  
Risk thou thine honour now to save thine honour,—  
Ay, and thy life. 'Tis looked for of no man  
To make his tongue his executioner ;  
Nor any hath this right, to bind his brother  
To die when it shall please him.

*Fer.* O honest Sala,  
We wrong thee much in Spain : there art thou deemed  
A heartless soldier ; not a bloody tale  
That would pass current, but usurps thy name :  
Men curse by thee. 1150

*Sa.* I pray you now return,  
And disabuse your friends.

*Fer.* Ay, that and more  
When I return.

*Sa.* Thou never wilt return,  
Unless thou fly at once.

*Fer.* Tell me the worst.  
*Sa.* What think you, should I slay you with these  
hands ?

*Fer.* Thou, Sala ! why ? I speak not empty words.

*Sa.* Their darkness is to me as emptiness.  
*Sa.* By heaven, I would not now unseal my lips,  
But I know him I speak to, and my speech  
Shall win thee. Hark, I have been for twenty  
years

Familiar with the king, one of his house ; 1160  
I have known the princess Almeh from her cradle :  
Her father's only child, she hath been to me  
My single joy no less : from the first words  
She lisped upon my knee, unto this day,

Her sayings and doings have been still the events  
Which measured time to me : her childish ways,  
Her growth, well-being, happiness, were mine,  
Part of my life. Whene'er I have been away  
On distant service, the same couriers

That carried my despatches to the king, 1170  
Returned to me with tidings of the child,  
Writ for my use, the careful chronicle  
Of prattle, with whatever pretty message  
She had devised to send me : as she grew,

I watched her, taught her, was her friend ; and while  
I trod in blood, and heard the mortal gasp  
Of foes my scimitar struck down to hell,  
I suffered nothing to approach my soul  
But what might too be hers. Sala is stern,  
Men say, and register my actions bluntly. 1180

To common qualities,—I serve my age  
In such a tedious practice,—but in truth.  
Sala is gentle as the tend'rest plant  
That noonday withers, or the night frosts pinch.  
I tell thee what I would not dare tell any,  
Lest he should smile at me, and I should slay him :  
I tell it thee knowing thou wilt not smile.

Now late it happened that I returned to Fez  
After some longer absence than was wont ;  
And looking still to meet the child I left,  
I found her not. She had made a dizzy flight  
From prettiest to fairest. Slow-working time  
Had leapt in a miracle : ere one could say,  
From being a child suddenly she was a woman,  
Changed beyond hope, to me past hope unchanged.  
Maybe thou hast never tasted, prince, this sorrow,  
When fortune smiling upon those we love.  
Removes them from our reach—when we awake  
To our small reckoning in the circumstance  
We are grown to lean on.—Cursed be the day  
Whereon we met : or would thou hadst slain me  
there—.

My wrongs are worse than death.

*Fer.* How ! can it be ?  
Tell me but truth. Art thou my rival, Sala ?  
Thou art : thou art. Yet 'twas thyself deceived me.  
Thou'st ever spoken of her as of a daughter.  
Forgive me, Sala ; thy familiarity  
And thy years blinded me. If, ere I came  
Her heart was thine, and I by pity's softness  
Have stolen the passion that was thine before,  
Now by mine honour I will do thy bidding :  
If 'tis the only way, I'll fly to-night.  
Thy word, and I will fly. Were ye betrothed ?

*Sa.* Nay, prince . . .  
*Fer.* Nay? . . . Yet if not betrothed, maybe  
Almeh hath loved thee, shown thee preference,  
Some promise . . .

*Sa.* Nay.  
*Fer.* Then, Sala, in plain words,  
How have I wronged thee ? what can be the cause  
Why thou didst threat to kill me ?

*Sa.* I said not that.  
*Fer.* Esteem'st thou then a prince of Portugal  
So much less than Morocco?

*Sa.* Dream'st thou the king  
Would wed his daughter to . . . An infidel, 1220

*Fer.* Thou'dst say.

*Sa.* Is't not impossible ?  
*Fer.* 'Twould seem

No miracle to me shouldst thou thyself  
Turn Christian.

*Sa.* By Allah ! Hush ! here is the king. Begone,  
Lest my goodwill to thee be more suspected  
Than it deserve.

*Fer.* I'll speak with thee again. [Exit.  
*Sa. (solus).* I have shot my best bolt forth, and  
missed my aim.

*Enter King.*

*K.* Sala, what dost thou here ? I sent for thee.  
*Sa.* No message, sire, hath reached me.

*K.* I am come myself  
To find thee ; I need thy counsel, and I desire  
Thou wilt put off the manner of advisers, 1230

Who affect disapprobation of whatever  
Is done without their sanction ; in which humour  
Thou hast looked grudgingly upon the marriage  
'Twixt Almeh and Morocco.

*Sa.* My dislike  
Hath better ground.

*K.* Whate'er it be, I bid thee  
Put thy dislike aside : the business threatens  
To fail without our aid.

*Sa.* How so ?  
*K.* The prince

Hath been with us five days : 'tis now full time  
He spoke his mind ; and yet he hath said no word.

*Sa.* Well, sire ?  
*K.* The cause : I'll tell thee first my thoughts.

*Sa.* The fancy of a maid is as the air—

Light, uncontrollable.

*K.* What dream is this ?  
'Tis not her liking that I count. The day

That Tarudante asks her she is his :  
'Tis that he doth not ask.—I have myself perceived

A melancholy habit that hath come  
Upon my daughter of laté, and grows apace.

I thought awhile 'twas love, but now I fear  
'Tis a deep disaffection : such behaviour,

So foreign to her years, might well repel  
So fine a lover. 1250

*Sa.* That is not the cause.

*K.* I say it is. I have watched her with the prince

Now for two days, and marked in her behaviour

Indifference and abstraction.

*Sa.* And if 'tis so ?  
*K.* Find some device to drive these humours off.  
Did I but know, could we discover, Sala,

What lies the nearest to her heart, a prompt  
And unforeseen indulgence would restore  
Her spirit to cheerfulness.

*Sa. (aside).* Now here is hope.

If I could work him to my purpose now. 1260

*K.* What say'st thou ?

*Sa.* Sire, the sufferings of the captives  
First hurt your daughter's spirit. Would you heal it,  
Release them.

*K.* Eh ! Wellah ! I think thou'rt right.  
Twice hath she knelt before me for these men :

I had never thought of it.

*Sa. (aside).* Heaven give my tongue

Persuasion.

*K.* I'll do it, Sala : 'tis worth the price.

*Sa.* There is yet one captive whom you cannot free.

*K.* Who's he ?

*Sa.* The prince.

*K.* He counts not with the rest.

*Sa.* Nay, since his wrong and claim stand above all.

*K.* Thou art pleading for thyself, Sala : thou

knewest

I hold the prince for Ceuta.

*Sa.* So, sire ; for never  
Will you hold Ceuta for the prince. You asked

My advice : you have it. Where my honour weighed

not,

Nor my long service finds me any favour,

Suspect not I would use a lady's tears :

Tho' true it be, the grief that Almeh felt

Hath been tenfold increased, since the good prince

Who gave me life was asked to buy his own.

*K.* But if I free the rest and keep the prince?  
*Sa.* A stinted favour brings no gladness. Yet  
 You could not more, you cannot, nay you are pledged.

*K.* Hark, Sala : I care not if he live or die.  
 Did I not offer him his liberty  
 On a condition? Since to win Morocco  
 Is to have Ceuta, I may change my terms,  
 And use him for that purpose, tho' it stand  
 One remove from my object : and I see  
 How I can make a bargain. Fetch my daughter,  
 For the same day she marries Tarudante  
 The prince and all the captives shall be hers :  
 And she shall know it. Send her hither.

*Sa.* I go.  
 (Aside.) Yet the condition mars the gift for all.

[Exit Sala.

*K.* Nay, he shall not dissuade me. 'Twas good  
 counsel.  
 Slipped from him unawares ; and tho' I swore  
 To keep the prince till he surrendered Ceuta,  
 That oath turned 'gainst myself I will cast o'er,  
 Making his liberty my tool ; and what  
 Self-interest persuades I'll do with grace.—  
 That men are strong or weak, foolish or wise,  
 According to the judgment of their fellows,  
 Is doctrine for the multitude. For me  
 I would possess my wisdom as my health,  
 In reality, not semblance.

Enter Almeh.

*Al.* My father sent for me?  
*K.* Come hither, Almeh.  
 I have news for thee;

*Al.* Good news?  
*K.* Thou shalt say good.

Guess.  
*Al.* There hath something happened?  
*K.* Something shall be.

*Al.* Is it peace with Portugal?  
*K.* Nay, not so far.

*Al.* Tell me.  
*K.* The Christian captives.

*Al.* Dare I guess  
 They may go free?

*K.* 'Tis that.  
*Al.* O kindest father,  
 Thou healest my heart, that hath the chief enlargement  
 In this deliverance. If they know it not,  
 May I go tell them?

*K.* Stay. There's one condition.  
 It lies with thee to fix the day.

*Al.* With me?  
 I say to-day.

*K.* Thou canst not say to-day.  
*Al.* How soon?

*K.* 'Tis thus. I make their liberty  
 A gift to thee the day thou shalt be married.

To Tarudante.  
*Al.* Ah!

*K.* The smile that came  
 So quickly to thy face hath fled again.  
 Is the condition hard?

*Al.* 'Tis like denial.  
*K.* Denial!

*Al.* To do the thing I never wished,

And if I wished lies not in me to do.

*K.* Thou dost not wish, sayst thou? It lies not  
 in thee?

*Al.* 'Tis true I do not wish this marriage, sire.  
*K.* Well, well. To wish to leave thy home and me  
 Were undesired : but to obey my will,  
 To trust thy welfare to my guidance, girl ;  
 Not to oppose my dictates . . .

*Al.* Truly, father,  
 I have found as little occasion to oppose,  
 As I have power to stand against thy will.

*K.* I know it, child : but for that hold thee to  
 blame :

Thou hast not wished : 'tis in thy power to wish,  
 Marriage thou dost not wish : but thou must wish  
 What is my will ; which to make more thine own  
 I add this boon. Wasn't not thy chief desire?

Dost thou not thank me?

*Al.* Alas . . .  
*K.* 'Tis no small gift; the lives of fifty men.

*Al.* Tell me, sire, with the captives dost thou  
 reckon?

Prince Ferdinand of Portugal?

*K.* I knew  
 Thou wouldest ask this, and am content to grant it.  
 See how I yield. I will go fetch thy lover;  
 Be ready to receive him : what thou dost  
 Ruleth his happiness as well as mine,  
 And theirs whose life I give thee. Await him here.

[Going.

*Al.* Stay, father, stay!  
*K.* Well, child!

*Al.* (aside). It cannot be:  
 I dare not tell—

*K.* What wouldest thou say?

*Al.* I know not.  
 I have not well understood ; not yet considered.

*K.* What is there to consider?

*Al.* Dost thou promise  
 The Christian captives and prince Ferdinand  
 Shall all, the day I am married, be set free?

*K.* I do.

*Al.* And if I marry not Morocco,  
 What is their fate?

*K.* They die ; unless the prince  
 Surrender Ceuta to me.

*Al.* O sire, the prince  
 Spared Sala's life : thou owest as much to him :  
 Thou mayst not kill him.

*K.* See, if that's a scruple,  
 How thou mayst gratify thyself and Sala.  
 I put this in thy power: Canst not thou thank me,  
 And smile on Tarudante?

*Al.* I thank thee, sire.  
 If I seemed not to thank thee, 'twas the effect  
 Of suddenness, nothing but suddenness.  
 I am glad to do it.

*K.* I knew thou wouldest be glad.  
 I shall go fetch thy lover. I shall not grudge

These hogs for him.

*Al.* Death, said he? He would slay him !  
 My gentlest prince! O bloody spirit of war,  
 That hast no ear where any pitiful plea

Might dare to knock.—Alas, my dismal blindness !  
 I am but as others are, selfish, O selfish,

That thought myself in converse with the skies ;  
 So shamed, so small in spirit. What is my love,

My yesterday's desire, but death to him?  
And what to me? What but an empty fancy  
Nursed against reason, which I cling to now  
In spite of duty. Duty . . . Ah, I remember  
I had a childish fondness for that name,  
Dreamed I would serve God willingly. But now,  
Now 'tis impossible . . . Now if I serve,  
I do his bidding with unwilling will;  
Yet must I do it.

## Enter Ferdinand.

Fer. Princess, I come to beg . . . Alas! thy sorrow  
Shows me a greater care.

Al. Nay; ask thy wish.

Fer. 'Tis changed to learn thy grief, and why that  
brightness,

That shone to cheer my life, now clouds with rain.

Al. Each hath his private grief, prince: why  
should I

Be wondered at, or questioned of my tears?

Enough the world is sad, and I am sad.

Fer. A twofold error, lady: the world is gay,  
And thou art half its splendour. When I first  
Beheld thee in this earthly paradise,  
What wondrous jewels, thought I, God hath strewn  
About the world, which in our count of it  
Stand out of reckoning, being unseen.

Al. And then  
If I was light of spirit, I knew not why;  
Now,—but thou speakest of some favour: tell me.

Fer. Since my request is guilty of my coming,—  
'Twas for my countrymen: to-day the gate  
Hath not been opened to them.

Al. I am happy, prince,  
Their woes are ended. Ere thou camest hither  
The king was here; and in his kindest mood  
Granted their liberty.

Fer. Thy prayers, lady,  
Must be the sweetest incense that from earth  
Perfumes God's mercy-seat: He bends to soften  
The heart that thou beseechest.

Al. Stay, 'tis thus.  
They are given to me to grace my bridal.

Fer. How!  
Thy bridal?

Al. When I am married where thou knowest,  
The prisoners shall be mine.

Fer. And when thy bridal?  
Al. Whene'er Morocco, that is come to woo me,  
Shall ask to wed me.

Fer. Lady, forbid me not.  
It needs no skill to read thy sorrow now:

For coldly speak'st thou, and with trembling tongue—

Al. What think'st thou then?

Fer. Forgive me, if I am bold:  
Thou dost not love him thou art bid to wed.

Al. That were my blame, since he is worthy of me.

Fer. Nay 'tis not that: but if I have guessed the  
truth,

O if thou hast now consented, and wilt sell  
Thyself for pity of these wretched men,

Now I forbid the odious sacrifice.

Perchance thou thinkest that these many souls

Against thy single welfare, must make up.

The greater stake: Not so; they're mites and scraps  
'Gainst thy immeasurable worth; a thousand

1370

Would not complete the thousandth part of thee; <sup>1420</sup>  
And were I where their base ill-natured wills  
Obey me, thou shouldst tell them for thy slaves  
As hairs upon thy head. 'Twere heavy tidings  
That thou shouldst love Morocco, and being so far  
Won to the faith, shouldst willingly renounce  
Thy saintly liberty: but rather so,  
Than that by one thou lov'st not, against thy will,  
Thou shouldst be harnessed 'neath the common yoke.

Al. My will is nothing, prince, and if Morocco  
Already hath three wives, I shall rank first. <sup>1430</sup>

Fer. Monstrous! Wilt thou stoop to such servile  
change?

Al. Unwittingly thou speak'st against thyself.

Fer. Alas! what words have injured me with thee?

Al. None: but thy fate is knit in one with theirs,  
Whose happiness thou bidst me now not weigh.

Fer. On that day shall I too be given to thee?

Al. Betray me not, I pray.

Fer. O Mockery!

What hast thou done? The best for thee.

Fer. For me!

O nay. And for thyself?

Al. Think not of me.

Fer. Not think of thee! My very thoughts of <sup>1440</sup>  
heaven

Are thoughts of thee. 'Tis now so short a time,  
Nor have I on my part any desert

To challenge favour at thy gracious hands,  
That I should dare to speak: nor any words

That man hath e'er invented, to combine  
In sentences that mock mortality,

Are proud enough to tell thee; therefore—  
I say in plainest speech, Almeh, I love thee.

For thy goodwill I thank thee: but my fate,  
If thou dost love me not, or art another's,—

Life or death, misery and imprisonment,  
Slavery or freedom, count as little with me,

As when I shall be dead where I may lie,  
Say, if thou canst, thou lov'st me: and if not,

Thou shalt at least have heard, and I have told,  
My tale; how to prince Ferdinand of Portugal

Thou didst appear the only being on earth  
Worth his devotion: that for thy possessing

He would have given all else, to live with thee  
As Christians use, in state of man and wife,

Which God hath blessed. <sup>1460</sup>

Al. No more, I pray no more.  
The graveyard ghosts are not so waste and dead  
As is thy phantom picture.

Fer. Dost thou love me?

Al. Why ask me? Yet be this an hour of truth,  
Tho' all time lie. I love thee, Ferdinand,  
Even as thou lovest me; would be thy wife,  
To live alone with thee as Christians use.

Fer. Almeh! Weep not. Fear nothing, if thou  
art mine.

Al. I am nought that is not thine: only thy hope  
I cannot share.

Fer. How canst thou love and fear?  
See, I can teach thee how to trust in love  
Now with this kiss.

Enter King, Tarudante, and Sala.

Al. (seeing K.) Away! My father! my father!

K. What see I?

Sa. (aside). Now could I slay him.

K. (to Tar.). These white-faced Christians  
Have most uncultured manners. (*To F.*) By my soul,  
Prince Ferdinand, thou usest thy liberty.  
With small restraint: (*To S.*) Sala, conduct the prince  
Into the dungeon tower: see him there locked.

Tar. (aside). 'Tis as I thought.

K. Begone, I say: my passion  
Brooks not his presence. [Exit *Sala* with *Ferdinand*.]

Tar. (aside). But what word for her,  
The greater culprit?

K. (to Al.). As for thee, my daughter, 1480  
Retire thou too. Thy blush cannot be cured  
But by this felon's punishment. Moreover,  
Thou dost not well to walk even in these grounds  
Unveiled without attendant. [Exit *Almeh*.]

Tar. (aside). 'Tis well said,  
Without attendant. (*To K.*) With us, your majesty,  
The women all go veiled.

K. And so with us  
The custom is approved, and general:  
But license hath been granted to my daughter  
And her attendants, when within the walls,  
Nor wilt thou find her modesty is touched  
By such concession. As for Ferdinand,  
Thou shalt decree his punishment.

Ta. Nay, sire;  
I shall not ask that. I have here a letter  
Writ by my father, urging my return:  
He needs my troops. I look for your permission  
To take my leave to-night. As for the matter  
Which brought me here, the service I was able  
To render your majesty has given me  
Much pleasure, as the recital will my father,  
And should confirm our friendship. I confess  
'Tis disappointment to me that the league  
Cannot be knit by marriage, and to have seen  
The princess hath much sharpened my regret.  
Could she have loved me; I had held myself  
Not so unworthy of her grace.

K. Stay, stay.  
Pray misinterpret not this fool's presumption  
As her consent.

Ta. O nay.  
I see thou'rt wronged.  
I bear thee no ill-will for thy resentment:  
I should feel shame for thee wert thou not shamed:  
But all shall be atoned for: the unbeliever 1510  
Shall pay full penalty. Thou shalt decree it.

Ta. Might that rest with me, I'd be quit of him;  
Deal courteously, and send him home to Spain  
To wife among his kin.

K. Be not so hasty.  
Make not so much of this. I promise thee  
All shall be well. Stay, prince, and Ferdinand  
Shall lose his head this very day.

Ta. Your majesty  
Mistakes me; I cannot sue. My troops are warned.  
K. Cannot I stay thee? Now, by God, ill done.  
I am wronged, wronged.

Ta. Farewell, sire: in such a soreness  
Few words are wisest. What Allah forbids  
Must be renounced. 'Tis of necessity  
I now depart. Yet should you need me again,  
Send, and I come. God's peace be with you. [Exit,

K. He is gone—

Incredible! Consenting: I could not gloss it:  
Before my eyes, the eyes of Africa,  
Is this her secret? this her melancholy.  
That cannot love? Treachery and apostasy!  
Or is it that sick passion, some have suffered?  
For things strange and detestable. I will see her:  
She shall renounce it.—*Hola!* (*Calling.*) Ho!  
within—

No cure but that: immediate disavowal,  
Ere 'tis too late. O shame! (*Calls.*) Ho there, within?

Enter Servant.

(To servant.) Give word that the princess attend me  
here. [Exit servant.

That devil knows; he looked as if he knew.  
And *Sala* knew it. 'Twas for this he urged  
The villain's liberty. He shall go free . . .  
To hell . . . and I will grant such liberty  
To all who have seen him. There's one hiding-place,  
Where I may stow dishonour. But for her, 1540  
My daughter; if yet perchance there is any spot  
In all her heart untainted by this shame.  
Which I may reach, that natural piety  
May feel my yearning sorrow . . . Tenderly,

Enter *Almeh*.

Tenderly must I work. Lo, where she comes,  
Her shameful head bowed down with consciousness.  
Come, *Almeh*, come; come nearer. See:  
Thy tender grace, thy beauty's perfect flower,  
The vesture of thy being; all thy motions,  
Thoughts, and imaginations, thy desires, 1550  
Fancies, and dreams; whate'er from day to day  
Thou art, and callst thyself, what is it all  
But part of me? Art thou the beauteous branch,  
I am the gnarled trunk that bore and bears thee;  
The root that feeds. I call thee not to judgment;  
Only to save what most I prize, thy name,  
And mine; there's one way that can be: Morocco  
Hath taken his leave: before he leave must thou  
Beg him to see thy injury avenged,  
And for thine honour's sake must on thy knees 1560  
Bid me revenge it. If on the same day  
The Christian prince insulted thee he die,  
And die at thy request, before the eyes  
That saw thy shame, ere busy tongues can tell  
A tale in the ear, such speedy penalty  
Will fright the scandal to a tale of terror,  
And save our name. Withal he is a prince,  
And that a prince should die may well alone.  
What sayst thou, child?

Al. Bid me not speak.

K. Thy tears  
And sobs I cannot read. I bid thee speak. 1570

Al. O father!

K. Speak!

Al. Thy words, recall thy words.

K. What words?

Al. Thy words of blood.

K. Ah, *Almeh*! *Almeh*!

Art thou my daughter?

Al. O sire, on my knees

I beg.

K. Well, what?

Al. His life! his life!

K.

Ah, traitress.

*Al.* Was not thy first condition hard enough,  
To save prince Ferdinand that I should marry  
Another? and I consented : but when now  
Thou knowest I love him . . .

K.

Love him. Thou confessest !

*Al.* I hid it from thee but to save his life ;  
Now I avow it to save him. If thou'rt wronged,  
Tis I have wronged thee : so if one must die  
Let it be me.

K.

Then perish all of us.

*Al.* Nay, why, when peace hath such a simple way,  
When kindness would cure all? If thou wouldest see  
How noble he is, how true . . .

K.

Silence! speak not  
What thou hast dared to think lest I should curse thee.  
I in my house to see God's holy laws  
Reversed ; my blood contaminate abroad  
With infidels! Fly quickly. What thou hast said  
Will keep thee prisoned till thy heart is changed.  
Go to thy chamber. I will send thee soon  
Physic to cure thee. From my sight! Away,  
Traitor, apostate.

Al.

O father, by thy love . . .

K. Away! away!

*Al.* By all God's pity I pray thee :  
For pity of me.

K.

Begone, lest I should strike thee.

*Al.* Strike me, and I will bear it. I did the wrong.  
Punish me and pardon. I only ask for him,  
Take not his life.

K.

The more thou pleadest for him,  
The more I hate him.

Al.

Heaven will soften thee.

Thou must relent. Thou wilt not slay us both.

K.

Begone, I say. [Exit Almeh.]

May all the plagues of hell  
Torture these Christians evermore. I see  
No safe revenge. Kill him? and the worst believed?  
And he my hope of Ceuta? I cannot kill him.  
It needs considerate action. Hola there. (Calling.)  
I'll speak with Sala. Hola there, hola !

*Enter Servant.*

Bid Sala attend me here. [Exit servant.]  
And if he blame me,  
Because I harked not to him at the first,  
He will not thwart my resolution now,  
When policy and revenge are bound together. 1610  
'Tis changed. The Christian now hath done a wrong,  
For which his death is due : I have my plan :  
I'll starve him till he yield. I'll force him to it  
By chains and torture till his stubborn pride  
Pay down his ransom humbly.

*Enter Sala.*

*Sa.* Peace be with you.  
*K.* The devil take thy mocking salutation.  
I have three matters for thee : attend. The first  
Is that Morocco leaves us, and with him  
Our army is gone ; whereon the second follows :  
Thou must send forth with speed to all the towns 1620  
To levy succours ; and thy forces here,  
Disordered in the war, visit thyself,  
Reform, and make report. The third is this,  
My will concerning Ferdinand,—and let that

Be first in thine attention ;—tis his death.  
My hospitality which he hath wronged,  
I now withhold . . . to death—thou understandest ?  
And more, 'tis death to any that shall give him  
A crust or drop of water : and I will change  
His entertainment. Set him in the stables 1630  
To serve the grooms : put chains upon his feet :  
Appoint a guard to enforce his tasks, and make  
Moulike their serjeant. For the execution  
I hold thee liable. Let not his life  
Outdrag three days. But hark : in spite of vengeance,  
And in remembrance of his claim on thee,  
He may go quit upon the old condition,  
Ceuta :—thou understandest ? Go tell him this,  
The only hope my clemency allows,  
But of my provocation not a word.  
Be thou in time prepared to clear thyself  
Of having known this mischief and concealed it.

*Sa.* My liege . . .

*K.* Begone and do my will. Thy words  
Save to persuade the prince. Speak not to me.  
It angers me to see thee. Go. I have done.

[Exit Sala.]

Three days I said ; three days. Within that time,  
Unless I have my town, I'll be revenged.

## ACT IV.

*Zapel and Sala, meeting.*

*Sa.* What tidings, Zapel? I have been all day  
away,  
And had no word.

*Za.* There's none of good to tell.  
She hath neither ate nor slept.

Will she not eat? 1650

*Za.* Nothing.*Sa.* 'Tis the third day.

*Za.* Nor will she sleep.  
She fights 'gainst sleep, as if 'twere death. Like one  
That must keep watch against its soft approaches,  
Sitting upon her couch with head inclined  
She mourneth to herself, and 'twixt her sighs  
What words may be distinguished overlook  
Her own distress, and squander their laments  
Upon an unknown sorrow, which she says  
Enwraps the world. Or sometimes she will sing 1660  
The melancholy strains which she hath heard  
The Christian captives use.

*Sa.* 'Tis a brain-sickness :  
Miserable.

*Za.* And ever, when I have tried to cheer her,  
Hath she rebuked me, as she is wont ; but gently,  
And bid me leave her : Then to meet her humour  
I have gone, but made occasion to return,  
Bringing such simple food as best she likes,  
Freshly prepared to tempt her ; and with tears  
I pray her but to taste : yet she endures,  
And saith, "I thank thee, Zapel : tho' I eat not,  
Thy skill is not misspent stretching the rack  
That proves my constancy. I prithee, girl,  
Set fresh and fresh before me." Hearing this  
I weep for pity : but she saith, "Be sure  
I shall not taste thy dishes, till one eat

Who is now denied."

*Sa.* Doth she not speak his name?

*Sa.* Rarely and reverently, as a name of God.

Then I am sent to learn the last; if yet

He lives, and whether he hath spoke of her. This morn,

As I returned from such unhappy quest,

She gave me this: See, 'tis a letter for him . . . [Showing letter.]

*Sa.* Thou darest!

*Sa.* O sir, the piteous prayer she made, Kneeling and clasping me about the knees, Went to my heart. But now I have it I fear

To have broke the king's command. I prithee take it.

*Sa.* Give 't me. [Takes.]

*Sa.* To see her thus, Allah forgive me, I wish well to the infidel. What word

Shall I take back?

*Sa.* Say truth. I will deliver it.

And tell her prince Enrique is returned:

He is camped a league away, and in such force As makes me hope I may persuade the king

1690

To yield to his demand. Since there's this hope,

Bid her preserve her strength bravely, nor thus

Prejudge God's will. His blessing a.d thy words.

[Exit Zapel.]

I said there's hope. 'Twas hope that bade me lie, For none I see. And this is misery,

To cherish consolations, and be happy

Doing the loathed thing. Am I content

To bear a letter of Almeh's to her lover?

Allah is great. My best desire is only

To save her,—my one hope that the prince should yield :

1700

And no persuasion but her love will move him.

This letter will entreat him; I must carry it.

*Enter King.*

*K.* Sala, make haste: a herald from Enrique.

This to me: Read. Edward of Portugal

Is dead. His eldest son being but a babe,

A regency now governs, and the rulers

Are prince Enrique and this Ferdinand.

The other I cannot read, and 'tis addressed

To Ferdinand. I doubt not that it urges

Acceptance of my terms and quick return.

1710

*Sa.* I pray it be so. Is it your pleasure, sire, To speak with Ferdinand?

*K.*

Ay, fetch him hither.

The dog being master now may change his mind.

*Sa.* And will you see him in his shameful dress?

*K.*

Nay, that is past:—his own, and with his sword.

*Sa.* And his despatch; shall I not bear it to him?

*K.*

Ay. Give it him; take it. Stay. (Aside.)

I never know

What it may say. Better to try him first

Without its knowledge. Should I fail 'twere time

To use it then. (To *Sala*.) Give it me. I'll keep it back.

1720

What is this other paper? [Seeing A.'s letter.]

*Sa.*

I pray, my liege,

Ask not.

I'll know.

*Sa.*

I pray you trust me, sire.

*K.*

Trust thee! what means this?

*Sa.*

'Tis a forbidden paper.

"Twould anger you to see it.

*K.* By heaven, I am angered Before I see it. What is it thou wouldst hide?

*Sa.* It is a letter which I have intercepted From Almeh to the prince. If you have pity On your own flesh, beseech you, let me use it As I judge fit.

*K.* And well discovered now.

By God, wouldst thou play carrier? Give it to me.

*Sa.* It hath not been five minutes in my hands.

*K.* And shall not be. (Takes.) Go fetch the prince.

*Sa.* If you should read it, sire, and find therein Messages of such softness as might melt The stubbornness of Ferdinand, I pray you, For her sweet sake that writ it, let it go And do its errand.

*K.* Go thou and do thine. [Exit *Sala*.] Will he too plot against me! Let us see

What style she dares. *Thy death, O my beloved,* Already is avenged.—O very tenderly,

And most determined.—Willingly I suffer What pains of thine I may. 'Tis all my joy

To have taken neither food nor rest

Since first thou wert deprived; nor will I take

Till thou be respited.—Why this might move him, Oh, if thou diest!—Ah, great heavens,

What read I here? Now I see all. Baptized! Baptized in secret by thy countrymen,

Baptized! Then let her perish. She is dead.

I cast her off. Till now I hid this from ihee, Doubting my worthiness.—He doth not know it.

He shall not know. None shall know. We will die,

I will slay all. I will go down to the grave,

And plead my cause before the holy angels,

Whether it may be permitted for a princess

Against her father and faith . . . —Nay, is't not writ

There is there no vain discourse nor charge of sin,

But pleasure to the faithful? And I to die

With house and kingdom shamed! How would my

crown

Shine 'mong the blessed caliphs, and the martyrs

Who fell in fight upon the road of God?

How would they look upon me,

If 'mong their moonbright scimitars I came,

My child's blood on my head? and she not there,

The fair flower of my life, the bud of grace,

Which my long-withering and widowed tree

Held to the face of heaven,

Now from my own trunk by my own hands torn.

Better the bole be split: heaven's lightning rend me:

All curses seize me. Almeh, thou must not die.

1730

[Enter *Sala*.]

*Sa.* Prince Ferdinand will come.

Is he not here?

*Sa.* He comes.

*K.* Why look'st thou thus upon me, Sala?

*Sa.* Because, sire, thou'st dishonoured me, and slain

A noble warrior, who gave me life.

*K.* Slain him!

*Sa.* Ay, king: except thou raise the dead.

For tho' he breathes, 'tis with such failing gasps

As mastering death allows to his sure prey.

*K.* Thou art over-fearful; three days without food

Should make him weak and faint, but not to death.

Nay, I am determined now he shall not die.  
Food will restore him. Set me here a table  
With meat and drink : here in the garden set it,  
And he shall eat at once. See it be done,  
And quickly.

Sa. Sire, I obey : tho' tis too late. [Exit.]

*During the King's following speech, servants come in with table, etc., which they set down, and go out.*

K. He must not die, since only by his life  
I can save Almeh : and 'tis not too late.  
The sight of food will tempt, the taste restore him :  
He will yield. I have here too what will move him,  
This letter ; were he built of Atlas stone.  
For Almeh's sake he must relent. I know,  
I see what must be done. I can consent :  
For such alliance with an ancient foe  
Is honourable. Peace between the realms,  
Happiness to both houses—bought may be  
With sacrifice on my side—yet there's pride  
On both to balance : and this way refused  
'Tis hell and death. And he will thank me too.  
He is brave and noble ; and the stoutest foes  
Are won to stoutest friendship. See he comes.

Enter Fer., upborne between two Moorish soldiers.

Prince Ferdinand, our quarrel comes to end.  
A message has arrived from prince Enrique.  
Your brother Edward, that was king, is dead,  
Wherefore the power which I have used on thee  
I now relax. I have a gentler purpose  
And a persuasion thou mayst guess ; while thou  
Owing no loyalty but to thyself  
I am well assured wilt not be slow to meet me.  
Sit with me first and eat : when thou'rt restored  
We will compose these matters at our leisure :  
Which done, and peace agreed, thou mayst return  
In time to pay thy brother's memory  
The sorrow it deserves : and in his place  
Govern the Portuguese. See, there's thy life,  
Thy strength and restoration. Sit and eat.

Fer. I feel no hunger, sire. The time is past  
When thou couldst save my life.

K. Despair not.

Fer. Nay,

I do not know the word.

K. This is despair.

Come, sit and eat.

Fer. I say the wish is past.

K. Dost thou not then believe ? See in this paper  
Writ to thyself. (Gives.)

(Aside.) Life doth not tempt this man.  
The call to rule his people yet may move him.  
What readst thou now therein ?

Fer. What thou hast said.  
My brother Edward's soul rest in God's peace !

K. Is nought else in thy paper ?

Fer. Ay, there's more.  
I'd not conceal it. Prince Enrique writes,  
If I return not to his camp to-night,  
He comes himself in force to rescue me.

K. Trust not to such deliverance.

Fer. Nay, O king :  
For cometh he at even or at morn,  
To-morrow or to-day, he cometh late.  
My eve; and morns are passed, and my deliverance

1780

Is nearer than his coming : yet for that,  
Tho' I shall see him not when he doth come,  
Not the less will he come ; for so he saith.

K. Thou wilt not eat and live ?

Fer. I thank thee, sire.  
K. (to attendants). Set the prince in the chair,  
and all go out ;  
And send the guard within.

[They obey. As they go out they take with them  
the sentinel from the pit gate. From this point  
the stage gradually begins to darken to end of act.]

Now, prince, we are left alone, eat what I give thee.  
[Puts food towards him.]

Fer. Why should I eat ?

K. (pouring). Myself I pour the wine.  
Drink with me. 'Tis thy life.

Fer. Why should I live ?  
K. Canst thou not guess ? I'll tell thee then, and  
speak

Not as a foe. Thy will hath conquered mine ;  
And if I wronged thee, thou hast wronged me more.  
Thou hast loved my daughter, and strangely won her  
love

Away from him whom for my son I had chosen,  
And pillar of my house : thou hast driven away  
My best ally, and left my kingdom naked :—  
For this thy death would be but fair revenge.  
And there's a secret cause why I should hate thee  
Above all this : thou hast suborned my daughter :  
She hath denied her faith. See there : (gives letter)  
see there,

What she hath writ. Read all. Seest thou not now ?  
'Tis true, she kills herself ; she dies for thee.  
Yet I'll forgive thee ; tho' she is none of mine,  
Apostate, disobedient.—Yet for her  
I will forgive thee. See, 'tis for her sake  
I pray thee eat.

Fer. Too late, 'twould be too late.

K. Say not too late : that word is death. Thou'rt  
brave.

Tho' not for me, yet for her sake I bid thee  
Eat, drink, and live. So she may live, and thou—  
The altitude of thrones may overlook  
Such differences—I give her thee to wife.

Save us, I pray.

Fer. What hear I ? wouldest thou then  
Have given me in good faith Almeh to wife ?

[Makes motions towards food.]

K. And will. Ay, drink.

Fer. And Ceuta ?

K. That is mine, Her price.

Fer. (thrusting things from him). Ah, never.

K. Dost thou then refuse ?

Fer. It cheereth death to spend my last breath thus.

K. Sittest thou there balanced 'twixt death and life,  
Daintily making choice, and to my offer  
Of all that God could grant thee, life and love,

Wrung from me by my sorrow, to my shame  
Preferrest the Christian hell ? O Infidel  
Apostatizing dog, lest now thy mouth

Should find the power to gasp one broken speech  
Of triumph over me, die at my hand.

Death shall not rob me of thy blood that's left.  
[Stabs Fer. across the table.]

Thus let thy brother find thee, if I fail

1820

1830

To send him also thither, where thou goest  
To thine idolatrous and thieving sires.

[Exit.

*Enter from pit Chorus . . . Twilight.*

CHORUS (*inter se*).

We come with laboured breath  
Climbing from underground :—  
In fear we creep and quake :—  
What voice with furious sound,  
Choking in wrath outspake  
The names of blood and death ?—  
Who is here ?—Look around.—  
Hearken !—the broken moan  
Of the ever-murmuring sea  
Reaches my ear alone—  
Come forward, ye may dare,  
All is quite still and free.—  
Ah, stay ! behold him there,  
That sitteth with his head  
Upon his breast bent low—  
The prince—the prince,—Forbear,  
He sleepeth.—Nay, I fear,  
Now may the truth strike dead  
My terror—step thou near—  
Gently.—Alas ! woe, woe,  
Woe, woe, woe, he is dead.  
He sits dead in his chair.

1880

1890

1900

See at his heart, where yet  
The murderous wound is wet.—  
Our prince, our prince is dead—  
They have slain him in their spite—  
Ai, ai, ai, ai ! Who now

Can save us ? We are lost men, friends ; we are lost—  
And thou, who saidst that we should live to fight,  
Where are thy arms ? Didst thou not make a boast  
That thou couldst see God's will ?—We are quite forsaken,

1910

Forgotten—(i.) Refrain, refrain. Can God forget ?  
Ch. Who could refrain ? Alas ! Hath not long woe  
Crushed us so low ?—Ah me ! This is our pain.—  
Now we deplore, alas !—Hell and despair !—  
Now it is plain—O woe—we are no more  
What once we were.—

(i.) Renew your courage, and devote your care  
In solemn duty to the dead. Uprise  
This noble corpse, and bear it to the bower ;  
Where, roofed by rose and jasmine, it may lie  
Hid from the dews of swift descending night.  
Take ye the feet, while I uplift the head,  
And, grasping in the midst, ye, by his robe,  
Bear him with slow accommodated step,  
Where we may best dispose his limbs in peace.

1920

[*Exeunt bearers with Fer.'s body to bower.*

Bearers. Alas, ah ! noble prince,  
What burial wilt thou have ?

Far from where thy fathers lie,  
In a heathen grave,  
If grave they give thee at all.  
Yet will thy country mourn ;  
And where victorious banners hang,  
And hymns of Christian joy are sung,  
Uprise thine empty tomb.

1930

The others. We see our fate to-night. Thus shall  
we die.—

If thus they treated him how shall we fare ?—

Who bids us hope ?—There is no hope, no hope :  
I'll mask my thought no more.

*Bearers re-enter from bower.*

Ch. (i). (*Who has Fer.'s letter and sword.*)

We are saved ! we are saved !

Ch. How saved ?—How so ?—Tell us !—

This letter here.

Ch. What letter ? say.

(i.) 'Tis from the prince Enrique.

Ch. Read ! read !

(i.) 'Tis written to prince Ferdinand,

In our home speech. 'Twas in his grasp.

Ch. Read ! read !

(i.) Unless I have thee in my camp to-night,  
At morn I rescue thee.

Ch. Where is the camp ?

(i.) A league hence to the west, he writes.

Ch. Alas !

Now they have slain his brother he will not come.—  
Or, should he come, then in the siege he makes

Hunger will slay us all.—

(i.) Hark then to me. (*Stage darkens more.*)  
He lying so near we may escape to him.

Ch. How shall we escape ?—The guards upon the

1930

walls  
Would see us.—They would send pursuit of horse  
To cut us down.—

(i.) Not now. I said not now ;  
But later in darkest night.

Ch. And how to escape ?

(i.) See here the prince's sword : with this in hand  
To creep at midnight on our sentinel,  
And slay him : then in darkness unperceived  
To climb out o'er the wall.

Ch. Now sayst thou well.

(i.) Ye trust me now ?

Ch. Ay, ay : if thou canst kill him.

(i.) Obey me, and I will lead you forth to-night.

Ch. What to do ?

(i.) Hush ye ! Our careless sentinel  
Must soon return. Let him not see us here.  
Begone, and some take up this food and wine,  
Which we may share below to help our strength,  
Hiding it 'neath your garments, as do I  
The sword. With silent step troop to your shades.

[*Exeunt. As they go out the stage darkens quite.*

Enter K. and Sala, Left. There is light on them  
from the doorway, where they stand awhile.

K. Come forth and see !

Sa. The night hath wrapped thy deed  
In fourfold darkness, that I should not see.

K. Thine eyes are straitened by the light within :  
'Tis not so dark but we shall see anon.

Sa. I have loved thee, sire, so well : served thee  
so long . . .

K. What sayst thou ?

Sa. I complain 'tis ill-repaid.  
I am ill-repaid.

K. Sala !

Sa. Prince Ferdinand

Had given me life.

K. Stay. Why harbourest thou still  
That grudge against me ? Didst thou read her letter  
I gave thee ?

*Sa.* I did.  
*K.* Thou didst : and canst not guess ?  
 To save her life I yielded. I consented  
 To make this man my son. If he would live  
 And give up Ceuta, then I promised him  
 Almeh to wife.

*Sa.* What hear I ?  
*K.* When he refused,  
 I smote him through.

*Sa.* Refused !  
*K.* There where he sits.

*Sa.* Can this be truth ?  
*K.* Ay, by the prophet. Ha !  
 He is gone.

*Sa.* Nay, none is here.  
*K.* He hath yet found strength  
 To crawl away to die. 'Twill not be far.  
 Hark ! heardst thou that ? Again. [Sighing heard.]  
*Sa.* 'Twas some one sighed.  
*K.* 'Twas that way, Sala : seek about.  
*Sa.* The moon  
 Is up, but curtained by yon inky cloud,  
 Cannot shine forth. Let me go fetch a lantern.

*K.* Go, go. I will watch here. [Exit Sala.]  
 Why should I fear ?  
 I'll draw my sword. (Calling.) Ferdinand !  
 (The sighing again.) If thou canst speak, say where  
 thou art. 1990

Answer me : Dost thou live ? nay, sigh not so.  
 If yet thou livest I think I would abate. (The sighing.)  
 Now 'tis here, now 'tis there. Thank heaven, the  
 moon :  
 (Moon appears, and shows ghost of Ferdinand  
 midway back.)

I see him. He stands upright ! Prince Ferdinand !  
 He walketh from me. Stay. I bid thee stand, —  
 By heaven, or I will slay thee. Villain, traitor !  
 [Goes after ghost, makes a lunge at him, and  
 ghost vanishes.]

*Enter Sala.*

*Sa.* What noise is that ? What, sire : with thy  
 sword drawn !

*K.* Didst thou not see him ?  
*Sa.* The Prince ?

*K.* Ay.  
*Sa.* Was it the prince  
 You speake with ?

*K.* Ay, he lives.  
*Sa.* And drew you upon him ?

*K.* I called to him, Sala, and he made away :  
 I followed him to stay him.

*Sa.* Thank God he lives.  
 You did not strike him.

*K.* Nay, I struck him not.  
*Sa.* 'Tis now like day. I see him nowhere, sire.

*K.* He hath hid himself. Look, Sala ; search  
 about.

I'll sit awhile. See ; why the food is gone,  
 The food that he refused. He hath eaten all.  
 His weakness was but feigned.

*Sa.* I'll search about.  
*K.* He stood and walked upright as if unhurt.  
 Yet how, unless he be a devil in flesh  
 Could he have 'scaped my mortal thrust ?

*Sa.* (in the arbour). Alas ! 2010

He is here, he is dead.  
*K.* How now ! he is dead ? [Goes to arbour.]  
*Sa.* (coming out). He is slain.  
 May heaven forgive thee ! (Aside.) Murdered, most  
 basely murdered,  
 And by this shifty, inconsiderate king.  
 Murdered for pride ; because he would not take  
 The gift that was begrimed. Oh, Almeh, Almeh,  
 Thou hadst a noble and a gentle lover.

*K.* (re-entering). How came he there, Sala ?  
 How could I see him ?  
 'Tis true he is dead and cold.

*Sa.* The Christian captives  
 Have caused our error. They have eaten the food,  
 And laid their prince's body in the bower : 2020  
 It was their sighing that we heard, re-echoed  
 From the deep pit.

*K.* By heaven,  
 I saw him, Sala, when the moon shone out :  
 He stood upright before me ; while I spoke  
 He walked away.

*Sa.* 'Tis like your majesty  
 Hath been deluded by some airy vision  
 Bred in the troubled brain.

*K.* Nay, he was there.  
*Sa.* The spirits of the dead have power to fix  
 The image of their presence in the place  
 Where life was robbed : there are a thousand stories  
 Of such frail apparitions.

*Enter Messenger.*

*K.* Who cometh here ?  
*Mess.* Your majesty's command.

*K.* I know thee : speak.

*Mess.* The scouts returned report the Christians  
 camped  
 To north of Alrah on the stream's left bank.  
 They do not hold the hill, and set no guard  
 Save on their front.

*K.* What numbers are they guessed ?  
*Mess.* At some four thousand : and prince Fer-  
 dinand  
 Is with them.

*K.* Who ?  
*Mess.* The scouts, your majesty,  
 Spake of prince Ferdinand's escape. They saw him  
 Ride at full speed into the Christian camp. 2040

*K.* When saw they him ?  
*Mess.* At dusk.

*K.* It could not be.  
*Mess.* They tell he galloped thro' their company.  
 They might have touched him. When they called his  
 name  
 He took no heed. Some fired their pieces at him :  
 And some pursued : but he, as tho' his horse  
 Were winged, held on, nor ever turned his head,  
 And soon was out of reach.

*K.* Enough. Begone. [Exit Messenger.]  
 I knew I had seen him, Sala : 'tis his spirit.  
 What is thy counsel ?

*Sa.* Think no more of this.  
 Take a sufficient force within the walls : 2050  
 The rest entrenched upon the hill without,  
 We must abide their coming on at dawn.

*K.* What is your force ?  
*Sa.* At most eight hundred men.

*K.* We are so o'ermatched, Sala, I shall not wait,  
I shall assault their camp to-night. The darkness  
Will hide our numbers : we will steal upon them.

*Sa.* I pray you, sire, be well advised. Consider,  
If our small force be sundered in the darkness. . . .

*K.* The darkness is our friend. We know the  
ground.  
Would I could blot the moon from heaven to-night.  
My plan is fixed. Take thou five hundred men  
And steal upon their rear, when battle joins  
I with the rest will charge their front.

*Sa.* My duty  
Bids me dissuade thee, ere I can obey.

*K.* I am brave to fight, Sala : but not to wait ;  
I will not wait an hour ; nay, not an instant.  
Thou wilt not move me. Not a word, I bid thee.  
'Tis my last hope. Come, get thy men together :  
If once they hear these hellish tales, we are lost.

## ACT V.

*Moonlight. Almeh entering, followed by Zapel.*

*Za.* My lady, I pray come back. 2070  
The night is sharp and cold : thou art not clad  
To encounter its brisk sting.

*Al.* Nay, I must breathe.  
I fell into a stifling slumber, Zapel ;  
And woke affrighted in a sweat of terror.

*Za.* For heaven's sake, lady, let thy spirit be  
soothed :  
Thou killlest thyself.

*Al.* Air, air ! that from the thousand frozen founts  
Of heaven art rained upon the drowsy earth,  
And gathering keenness from the diamond ways 2080  
Of faery moonbeams visitest our world  
To make renewal of its jaded life.  
Breathe, breathe ! 'Tis drunken with the stolen scents  
Of sleeping pinks : faint with quick kisses snatched  
From roses, that in crowds of softest snow  
Dream of the moon upon their blanchèd bowers.  
I drink, I drink.

*Za.* If thou wilt tarry here,  
Let me go fetch thy cloak.

*Al.* Where is my father ?  
Za. He is not in the castle.

*Al.* Where is Sala ?  
I must speak with him.

*Za.* They are both sallied forth  
To assault the Christian camp.

*Al.* O then 'twas true  
The noise I heard. They are fighting : 'twas the guns,  
The shouts I heard. I thought 'twas in my ears.  
—I have had strange visions, Zapel, these last days :  
'Twere past belief what I have seen and heard,  
I'll tell thee somewhat when I have time—O love,

If thou wouldst be my muse,  
I would enchant the sun ;  
And steal the silken hues,  
Whereof his light is spun :  
And from the whispering way 2100  
Of the high-arching air  
Look with the dawn of day  
Upon the countries fair.

*Za.* See I will fetch thy cloak.

[Exit.

*Al.* This is the reason  
Why all's so quiet. Sweet peace, thou dost lie.  
Men steal forth silently to kill : they creep,  
That they may spring to murder. Who would think,  
Gazing on this fair garden, as it lieth  
Lulled by the moonlight and the solemn music 2110  
Made everlasting by the grave sea,  
That 'twas a hell of villany, a dungeon  
Of death to its possessors. Death.—

*Za. (re-entering).* Here is thy cloak.

*Al.* Away ! what dost thou think,  
Zapel, of death ? I'll tell thee. Nay, I promise  
I've much to tell.—Thou'st heard, when one is dead,  
An angel comes to him where he lies buried,  
And bids him sit upright, and questions him  
Of Islam and Mohammet. 'Tis not so.

For in my dream I saw the spirits of men  
Stand to be judged : along the extended line 2120  
Of their vast crowd in heaven, that like the sea  
Swayed in uncertain sheen upon the bounds  
Of its immensity, nor yet for that

Trespassed too far upon the airy shores,  
I gazed. The unclouded plain, whereon we stood,  
Had no distinction from the air above,  
Yet lacked not foothold to that host of spirits,  
In all things like to men, save for the brightness 2130  
Of incorruptible life, which they gave forth.

Wondering at this I saw another marvel :  
They were not clothed nor naked, but o'er each  
A veil of quality or colour thrown  
Showed and distinguished them, with bickering glance  
And gemlike fires, brighter or undiscerned.

As when the sun strikes on a sheet of foam  
The whole is radiant, but the myriad globes  
Are red or green or blue, with rainbow light  
Caught in the gauzy texture of their coats,—  
So differed they. Then, as I gazed, and saw 2140  
The host before me was of men, and I

In a like crowd of women stood apart,  
The judgment, which had tarried in my thought,  
Began : from out the opposed line of men  
Hundreds came singly to the open field

To take their sentence. There, as each stepped forth,  
An angel met him, and from out our band  
Beckoned a woman spirit, in whose joy

Or gloom his fate was written. Nought was spoken,  
And they who from our squadron went to judge 2150  
Seemed, as the beckoning angel, passionless.

Woman and man, 'twas plain to all that saw  
Which way the judgment went : if they were blessed,  
A smile of glory from the air around them

Gathered upon their robes, and music sounded  
To guide them forward : but to some it happe  
That darkness settled on them. As a man

Who hears ill tidings wraps his cloak about him,  
For grief, and shrouds his face, not to be seen ;  
So these by their own robes were swallowed up, 2160  
That thinned to blackness and invisible darkness,

And were no more. Thus, while I wondered much  
How two fates could be justly mixed in one,  
Behold a man for whom the beckoning angel

Could find no answering woman, and I watched

What sentence his should be ; when I myself

Was 'ware that I was called. A radiant spirit

Waited for me. I saw prince Ferdinand :—

Go tell him that I am here.

Za. I cannot, lady.

Al. The king and Sala are gone forth to fight :  
There's none can know. Be not afraid. Obey.

Za. Alas ! alas !

Al. Why dost thou stand and wail ?

Za. Oh, I would serve thee ; alas ! but 'tis too late.

Al. Too late ! how 's't too late ? If he were dead . . .

Za. Lady, bear up, I pray thee : for 'tis sure  
Thy dream betrayed the truth.

Al. The truth ! Alas !  
Thou dost believe he is dead. Why, folly, think  
How could I then be living ? It could not be  
That I, a feeble woman, full of faintings  
And fears, were more enduring to outlast  
The pangs of hunger than is he, a man  
Whom hardship hath injured. Nay, while I live  
He must be living.

Za. True it is he is dead.

Al. Thoa art suborned : thou liest, thou dost  
Confess.

Za. O nay.

Al. Now God have pity, or thou hast lied.  
But thou hast lied. Didst thou not say the king  
Sent for him forth ? Didst thou not know the cause ?  
His brother has returned in force to take him.  
Didst thou not see the dungeon'door set wide ?  
And dar'st lie thus ?

Za. (aside). Alas ! what can I say ?

(To A.) Here is a chair : I pray thee sit awhile,  
I will go find him if I may.

Al. (aside). She lied.

Now she will fetch him. (To Za.) Where's the seal ?

Za. Here, here. Here, here.

Al. I am dizzy. Lead me to it. Go fetch the prince.

Za. Be comforted.

Al. Who hath sat here, I say ?

Who hath sat here ?

Za. Prithee be comforted.

Al. If this should be !

Za. Verily we are God's, And unto Him return.

Al. Thou, thou ! Begone.

Stay, Zazel, here : give me my cloak. I am cold.  
Since I must die . . . think not this strange, I pray.  
Bring food to me.

Za. Thank God. 'Tis the sea air  
Hath quickened thee.

Al. Thinkst thou that vexed monster  
Hath any physic in his briny breath ?

For grief like mine ?

Za. Lady, have better heart.

Why, thou must live. When once thy tears have fallen  
Thou wilt be comforted.

Al. How shold I weep ?

Bid men weep who with their light-hearted sin.

Make the world's misery bid women weep.

Who have been untrue to love and hope : but I,

Why should I weep ? Begone : bring me food here.

Za. O that I am glad to do. Thank God for this.

[Exit.

Al. Why did she lie to me ? Had they a plot  
To make me think he is dead ? Sala's my friend :  
Sala sent word of hope : and if he lives . . .

All may be saved. Nay, if he be not gone,  
If yet he is in the castle, I may find him.  
I'll give him food : we will steal forth together :  
I have marked the way : and by the rocks of the shore  
We may lie hid till we may reach the camp.  
Now would I had kept my strength. Had I foreseen  
This chance . . . There's none about. 'Tis not too  
late. [Noise of guns and fighting heard.

I may dare call. Prince Ferdinand ! Good heart,  
What noise of battle. Pray God he be not there.  
Against my site now I pray God : I pray  
Our men be driven back : yet not too soon,  
Ferdinand ! Ferdinand ! Heaven grant there's nope  
To hear but he ; and he will never hear me  
Calling so fearfully, so faintly . . . Alas !  
Better to seek him. Since he is not within,  
He must be in this garden. He will have sought  
Some shelter from the night.—Ah ! the arbour . . .  
therē . . . [Goes to arbour.

Why, here. Wake, Ferdinand, wake ! Come, 'tis I,  
We may escape. Come. Nay, this cannot be.  
Ah, God !—not this. Have pity ; undo it, revoke ;  
O let thy hand for once undo.  
Thou mightest, O Thou mightest. Ah, how cold.  
Oh ! oh ! he is murdered. Blood, his blood. 'Tis true.  
Dead, and my dream, my fate, my love ; 'tis done.  
The end. Nay, God, as Thou art God, I trust Thee ;  
Take me with him. Here-in this bower of death  
I leave my body,—to this pitiless world  
Of hate : and to thy peaceful shores of joy  
I arise. O Ferdinand ! me thou didst love.  
Thou didst kiss, once . . . and these thy lips so cold  
I kiss once more. I have no fear : I come.

[Dies, falling on Ferdinand's body.

Scuffling at back of stage, the guard runs forward,  
followed by the Chorus.

Guard. Some fiend hath pierced my back in the dark.

Ch. Hey, fellow ;  
Silence, or I will slay thee. 'Tis well ; he is dead.—  
Silently, silently.—Stay, stay. Which way ?—  
Here o'er the wall.—Hark thou, there's fighting there—  
Our men have driven them back—we be too late.—  
They will return—See where they climb the wall.

[The shouting and firing are grown quite near, and  
some figures are seen through the trees scaling the  
wall from without.

Ch. Who be they ? See, they are swarming in the castle—

Our men, 'tis they. We are saved.—Make not too  
sure—

Best hide among the trees.—Hide, hide.—I'll take  
The pagan's scimitar. [They retire among trees.

Enter left through the door a few Moorish soldiers,  
followed by the king, whom Enrique pursues.

Soldiers. To the walls ! to the walls !—  
Too late—they are here.

En. (to K.). Thy sword. Give up thy sword.

K. Curse thee. I defy thee.

En. Thy sword, or I shall slay thee.  
K. Never.

Ho ! villains, rally. 'Tis the prince Enrique.  
Kill him, and save me.

En. A rescue ! a rescue !

K. Die,  
Accursed infidel: but ere thou die . . .  
[The soldiers set on Enrique with the king.  
This hand that slayeth thee, hath slain thy brother.

En. May God forgive thee if thou speak truth.

The Captives rush out from the trees and overpower  
the soldiers, the armed of them kill the king as he  
fights with Enrique.

Ch. A rescue!  
Revenge—revenge.

K. Ha! treachery, ho! I am slain. [Falls dead.

En. Now who be ye?

Ch. Your own men, Prince; the captives.

En. Praised be God! ye have saved my life.

The Christian soldiers who were scaling the wall now  
come forward.

Ch. soldiers. Victory! victory!

The castle is taken.

En. Some go seize the towers.  
Make speed: there may be men we know not of.  
Take store of ammunition. [Some run off.

Enter more Christian soldiers by door (L.), leading  
Sala prisoner.

1st Soldier. Here is the general taken.

En. Sala ben Sala!

Sa. 'Tis I.

Give me thy sword.

Sa. I give it thee. [Gives.

En. Is the day ours?

Sa. The night is yours.

En. I pray, What force is in the castle?

Sa. There is none.

Where is the king?

En. See thou: But where's my brother?

Sa. What! slain! the king!

En. I bade him render his sword:  
But, when he saw I stood alone before him,  
He made a rally of some beaten men  
Who had fled with him; and so provoked his death  
At the hands of his own prisoners, who ran  
Upon him from the trees and cut him down.

Sa. By their hands fell he on this spot?

En. 'Twas so.

Sa. O justest stroke of fate. 'Twas here he slew  
The prince thy brother.

En. Tell me not, I pray,

That brag of his was true.

Sa. Alas, 'tis true.

En. My brother is dead! Ferdinand, Ferdinand!

Sa. Thy grief is as my shame.

En. Eternal shame.  
He who spared thee: your royal prisoner,  
Murdered.

Sa. Forbear. I'll lead thee where he lies.  
See thou, he is in the bower,

En. (approaching bower). Ah! my brave brother!  
Is thy proud spirit no more? But what is this?  
Who is this woman that with eager arms  
Embracest his pale corpse?

Sa. (pressing forward). How sayst thou? Almeh.  
Dead, dead.

En. Not so, she is warm.

Sa. Almeh. Sweet'st Almeh!  
O nay, she is dead. Ah, loveliest child of earth,  
Is thy young bloom perished? Alas! alas!  
Is this thy end? O miserable king,  
What hast thou done?

### CHORUS.

Alma is dead! Alma the fair!—  
By love of Ferdinand whelmed in his fate.—

Lament her, O lament.

(I.) Joy of our heavy prison'; Ch. Rescued too late—  
Beauty too fair. (I.) Ah! surely in earth's prison.

Ch. A mortal as immortal made—  
O unforeseen her end! Lament, lament!

(I.) Our woe is a storm, our hope the fringe of a  
shade,

The smile of a cloud by tempest rent.

Ch. A dawn in vain arisen,—

Alma is dead:

And we, to our superfluous prayer

Permitted still, our lives have won,—

Shaking in fear to be untimely undone,—  
By long misdoing undone, unworthy who were;

Saved by her, but saved too late.

Alma the fair,

Our Alma is dead.

En. What mean these words?

Sa. O prince,  
The woes so suddenly befallen us here  
Make a long tale. In brief, these whom thou seest  
Embraced in death, were drawn in life together  
By love's o'ermastering bond. Fate's stroke at me  
Is that I lie to tell it.

En. And was't for that,  
Thy king slew Ferdinand?

Sa. That was not all:  
For Satan did persuade our thwarteous king  
To make a godless bargain of their loves:  
He would have given his daughter to the Prince  
As Ceuta's price. When he refused, 'twas then  
In pride and wrath he slew him.

En. Alas, my brother.  
Inflexible in honour against thyself.  
If but for a day thou hadst seemed to make consent,  
All had been well.

Sa. Not well for him. He lived  
And died with tongue as faithful as his soul.

Ch. He tells not all. Maybe he doth not know.

En. What's more to tell?  
Ch. O sir, the princess here,  
Who loved thy brother, learned the faith of us.

Her name is Alma. She is a Christian.

Sa. Yea,  
'Tis true. I knew it. I would have hidden it from thee.  
In this we are shamed most. Prince Ferdinand  
Conquered us here. His love and not his arms  
Wove our disaster.

Chor. Love and faith have conquered.  
Yet did his sword no less avenge his death.  
See, prince, 'tis here, wet with the murderer's blood.  
It saved thee. For this we may rejoice:  
And that we shall return.

En. Ye shall return. But now 'tis not an hour  
For your rejoicing. Still your tongues. And, Sala,  
It lies with thee in place of thy king dead.  
To treat with me. Here is thy sword: and thus

[Giving.

I wipe out debt ; knowing that thou hast been  
Generous and faithful to my hapless brother.  
Let us make peace. Possess you what was yours  
Before this war : I shall lead back my troops,  
Nor vex your kingdom further. But I claim  
The body of your princess, to inter  
In Christian ground. One grave shall hold these lovers.

*Sa.* I would not separate them,—Heaven be my  
witness.—  
But shouldst thou bury Almeh in some spot  
Whereto I might not come, there's nothing left  
For Sala on this earth but still to fight,  
To gain possession of that holy tomb.

*En.* Fear not, for I will have their sepulchre  
In Ceuta, and there to thee it shall be granted  
To enter when thou wilt.

*Sa.* I loved her, prince,  
Before thy brother.

*En.* For myself, I vow

2360

Ne'er to draw sword again. I count all days  
That ever I spent in arms lost to my life.  
Man's foe is ignorance : and the true soldier  
May sit at home, and in retirement win  
Kingdoms of knowledge ; or to travel forth  
And make discovery of earth's bounds, and learn  
What nations of his fellows God hath set  
In various countries ; and by what safe roads  
They may knit peaceful commerce,—this is well,  
And this hath been my choice. To shed man's blood  
Brings but such ills on man as here ye see.  
2370

To save my brother and these Christian captives  
I drew this sword, which thus I sheathe again  
For ever.

*Ch.* Thou wilt lead us home.

*En.* Peace ! peace !  
So much is saved. Now have ye mournful duty  
Here to the dead. Bring ye these lovers in.  
Let there be no more speech.

THE END.

Yattendon, 1886.

*NOTE.*—This play, named after the chorus, is on the same subject as Calderón's *El Príncipe Constante*, from which the little common to both plays is directly taken. Some of the differences are historic; but the most dramatic, *Sala ben Sala*, whose fine figure is substituted for Muley, is a famous warrior; and the whole story has this claim on English attention, that the Portuguese *Regulus*, Ferdinand, and his brother Henry, "the Navigator" of more solid renown, were grandchildren of John of Gaunt, through his daughter Philippa, who was married to King Joam I. The history is shortly given in the King of Fez' long speech, page 103, line 120 et seq.

Some of the verbal contractions in the printing, where apostrophes supplant vowels, are accidental; but sometimes they are intended for guides to the rhythm in otherwise doubtful places.

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